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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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14 Kukis released in Manipur after a month

IMPHAL, 9 JUNE

Nearly a month after 14 Kuki individuals were abducted by armed groups in Manipur's Senapati district, all the hostages were released on Tuesday, an official said.

The release of the 14, who were abducted last month following the killing of three church leaders in Kangpokpi district, was facilitated by the United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of the Naga community in Manipur, and other Senapati district-based civil society organisations.

UNC president Ng Lorho said the hostages were set free following appeals by the central and state governments, church bodies and apex tribal organisation.

More than 50 people were abducted and held hostage by armed groups in Kangpokpi and Senapati districts on 13 May, hours after three church leaders were killed in an ambush in Kangpokpi district.

Of them, 31 people have been released, including 12 Naga women from Konsakhul village and 16 Kukis from Kangpokpi district earlier. Two Salesian brothers had also been set free.

Six Naga men, however, continued to be held hostage, and their whereabouts are not yet known. —*PTI*

RS thriller: Cong pick out, MLAs' B'luru trip cancelled

EC says she failed to disclose criminal case; Cong cries foul

BHOPAL, 9 JUNE

Just when Congress thought its biggest challenge was preventing its MLAs from crossing over to BJP ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections, the contest took an unexpected turn — its sole candidate was knocked out before voting could even begin.

In a dramatic day of political twists, the nomination of Congress candidate Meenakshi Natarajan for the 18 June Rajya Sabha polls in Madhya Pradesh was rejected during scrutiny by EC on Tuesday after she failed to disclose details of a pending criminal case in Telangana.

This discrepancy was pointed out by BJP's BJP State General Secretary Rahul Kothari.

However, senior advocate and Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Tankha claimed no FIR had been registered against Natarajan. Congress in-charge Harish Chaudhary said she had merely received a court notice, which did not require disclosure under Election Commission rules, and maintained that her nomination should not have been rejected.

Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan; Sachin Pilot, KC Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh protest outside EC office in New Delhi on Tuesday —*PTI*

The development threw Congress camp into disarray.

Congress MLAs were all set preparing to leave for Bengaluru amid fears of poaching and cross-voting. Sources said a flight arranged to transport them was recalled from the runway after news of the rejection emerged.

BJP's decision to field a surprise third candidate Mahesh Kewat had already triggered anxiety within the Congress. While BJP, with 164 MLAs in the 230-member MP Assembly, is assured of winning two of the three seats, Congress had the numbers to secure the third seat with its 65 legislators. With Natarajan's nomination rejected and the deadline for filing nominations having expired on 8 June, BJP now has an advantage.

Congress accused BJP of engineering "seat theft" after "vote theft", and alleged that "democracy is being killed". Senior Congress leaders KC Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh rushed to Election Commission office in New Delhi but alleged they were not allowed inside, and later staged a protest outside. —*Salar News*

Woman 'drugged & gangraped' in Davangere; 10 held

DAVANGERE, 9 JUNE

A 41-year-old woman was allegedly drugged and gangraped in this district, and 10 people have been arrested, police said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred on the evening of 3 June in a village coming under Basavapatna police station, they said.

The matter, however, came to light only on 8 June after a video of the woman in an intoxicated state, allegedly recorded by the accused, went viral after being shared by them on WhatsApp groups, police said.

All 10 people named in the FIR have been arrested in connection with the incident following a complaint lodged by the woman, they added.

Police, said in her complaint, the survivor stated that on the evening of the incident, while she was walking towards her village following a domestic dispute, two men approached her and offered help.

They allegedly offered her a soft drink, which was suspected to have been laced with a sedative, following which she became unconscious, a senior police officer said.

She was subsequently taken to an isolated farm on the outskirts of the village, where a group of men had gathered, he said.

The woman alleged that she was sexually assaulted by the accused and that they also took photographs and recorded videos of her while she was in an intoxicated state, police said.

After learning from villagers that the videos had gone viral, she approached the police and lodged a complaint.

"We have secured all 10 accused in the case. Further investigation is underway," SP Shekhar HT said. —*PTI*

Govt cuts subsidised LPGs under Ujjwala from 9 to 4

NEW DELHI, 8 JUNE

The government has reduced the number of subsidised cooking gas cylinders available annually to beneficiaries of its flagship Ujjwala scheme nine to four, said Praveen Mal Khanooja, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, on Monday.

Khanooja said the revised entitlement broadly matches the average annual consumption of Ujjwala beneficiaries.

Khanooja said the cost of supplying a domestic LPG cylinder has risen to more than Rs 1,600, following a surge in international prices that followed the outbreak of war in West Asia at the end of February.

Indian households continue to pay among the lowest prices for cooking gas globally despite this, he noted, adding that despite the price hike, oil companies continue to lose about Rs 700 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), launched in May 2016 to provide deposit-free LPG connections to adult women from poor households, beneficiaries were initially entitled to 12 subsidised 14.2-kg cylinders a year. The subsidised quota was reduced to nine cylinders last year and has now been cut further to four.

This follows increases in LPG prices. The price of a 14.2-kg cylinder in Delhi has risen by a cumulative Rs 89 over two hikes in the past three months, the latest on 7 June, taking the retail price to Rs 942. After accounting for the Rs 300 subsidy, PMUY beneficiaries pay Rs 642 for a 14.2-kg cylinder.

Apart from LPG, the oil companies have also raised petrol and diesel prices by about Rs 7.50 a litre each in four instalments last month. CNG rates too have been hiked by Rs 6 per kg.

India's LPG import costs are linked to the Saudi Contract Price (CP), which has risen about 46 per cent since February. —*PTI*

Farmer attempts suicide over debt at Vidhana Soudha

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

A sandalwood farmer from Haliyur in Chikkamagaluru district, Vishu Kumar, allegedly attempted suicide by hanging from a tree on the Vidhana Soudha premises here on Tuesday afternoon. Timely intervention by the police saved his life. He was taken to the police station afterwards for questioning.

He had earlier tried to cut a sandalwood tree on Vidhana Soudha campus in 2025, alleging that he did not get the compensation for the acquisition of around 1.5 acres of his land by the National Highways Authority of India in 2016 for a expansion project, sources said.

"The court had directed the Deputy Commissioner of Chikkamagaluru to finalise the matter in four weeks and pay the compensation... If they want to cut my trees to acquire my land they have to issue a notice but neither the directives were followed nor any information is being provided," Vishu Kumar alleged.

He further said that he is entitled to nearly Rs 62 crore for the land and the trees, but that the Forest Department assessed the compensation at only Rs 62 lakh, resulting in a lengthy dispute. —*Salar News*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, or SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

CID searches Mamata's residence in 'forged signature' case

KOLKATA, 9 JUNE

A CID team on Tuesday entered the Trinamool Congress (TMC) headquarters-cum-residence of party chief Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata's Kalighat after a brief standoff with security personnel, as part of its investigation into the alleged forging of MLAs' signatures in a controversy that has deepened divisions within the party.

Officials from the state investigating agency, accompanied by Kalighat police and a large contingent of women personnel, arrived at 30B Harish Chatterjee Street in the afternoon. The visit followed a response by TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee to an earlier CID notice, in which he reportedly stated that signatures of legislators had been collected at the party's central office.

Abhishek Banerjee, currently in New Delhi with Mamata Banerjee, has been summoned to appear before the CID by 5 pm on Tuesday.

Senior TMC leaders Kunal Ghosh and Madan Mitra reached the premises but were denied entry. Later, TMC MP and advocate Kalyan Banerjee met CID officials and alleged that the investigation was politically motivated

Former MP Subhasish Chakraborty initially said the party would not permit a search in Abhishek Banerjee's absence, leading to a brief confrontation. However, after additional police personnel were deployed, CID entered the premises.

CID officials arrive at the Kolkata residence-cum-party headquarters of TMC chief Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday—*PTI*

The case stems from allegations that signatures of TMC legislators were forged on a proposal submitted to Speaker seeking recognition of senior MLA Sovandeb Chattopadhyay as Leader of Opposition. The controversy, which led to an FIR and CID probe, has escalated into what is being described as the biggest crisis in TMC's 28-year history after 58 of the party's 80 MLAs reportedly backed expelled MLA Ritabrata Banerjee for the post. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

PM backs Kuwait's sovereignty, urges de-escalation of war

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday reiterated India's strong condemnation of attacks on Kuwait's sovereignty and territorial integrity during a telephone conversation with Kuwait's Amir, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, as West Asia tensions continue to simmer.

The conversation came days after an Indian national was killed in an Iranian strike on Kuwait International Airport on 3 June.

Another Indian was killed in a strike on a power and water desalination plant on 30 March.

According to the Prime Minister's Office, the two leaders stressed the need for de-escalation and diplomacy for the earliest restoration of peace in the region.

The Prime Minister also thanked the Amir for ensuring the safety and well-being of the large Indian community in Kuwait. —*PTI*

—SCREENGRAB

US PILOTS RESCUED BY DRONE AFTER CHOPPER CRASHES IN HORMUZ

DUBAI, 9 JUNE

Two crew members aboard a US Army helicopter that crashed near the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday morning were rescued uninjured by an uncrewed American surface drone. It was the first such operation carried out by US forces, the officials added.

US Central Command (Centcom) have said the two "soldiers were safely rescued within approximately two hours " after their AH-64 Apache helicopter went down "near the coast of Oman while patrolling regional waters."

US President Donald Trump told the US will "respond" as he accused Iran of shooting down an Apache helicopter that was patrolling over the Strait of Hormuz.

The American military has been enforcing a blockade on Iranian crude oil shipments and tankers, seeking to pressure Tehran into reaching a deal. Officials have been unable to turn the April ceasefire between the two countries into a deal to permanently end the conflict.

Meanwhile, Trump said the US has "a good chance" of signing a deal with Iran in "two or three days," without providing details. He has repeatedly predicted that a deal is near since April, despite mediators, primarily led by Pakistan, failing to get a deal across the line. —*PTI*

>>>*More on Page 3*

TOO MUCH PESTICIDE

After Japan, Nepal bans Indian mangoes

KATHMANDU, 9 JUNE

Nepal restricted imports of mangoes from India, citing excessive pesticide and inadequate quarantine facilities along border areas, particularly in Madhesh Province.

The move comes weeks after Japan banned imports of Kesar, Alphonso, Langra and Banganapalli mangoes for the first time in two decades. The decision followed inspections in Uttar Pradesh that found deficiencies in fumigation and disinfection procedures.

Japan had previously banned Indian mangoes in 1986 over fruit fly infestations, lifting the ban 20 years later.

Officials in Nepal said the move has boosted demand for locally grown mangoes and provided relief to domestic farmers, who no longer face competition from imported fruit during the summer. Authorities have projected the restriction as an opportunity to promote locally produced and "healthier" varieties.

However, officials and traders warned that Nepal's production may not be sufficient to meet nationwide demand. Major mango-growing districts include Siraha, Saptari and Dhanusha, with the harvest typically lasting only from mid-May to mid-July.

Industry experts say the restriction could affect mango-based businesses. Traders have urged the government to strengthen quarantine and quality-testing rather than impose a ban. Traders warned prices, currently around NPR 100-150 per kg in Kathmandu, could rise further if restrictions continue. —*PTI*

Hold Pak accountable for PoK violence: India

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

India on Tuesday came down heavily on Islamabad for its "brutality" against the people of Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir (PoK) and called on the international community to hold it accountable for its "abuses."

India's reaction came as over 30 people were reportedly killed in police action on protesters and 300 were injured in several parts of PoK.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, slamming Pakistan, said there have been "desperate" attempts by Islamabad to cover up its "failings" and deflect attention away from its alleged human rights abuses.

"There are reports of severe police brutality in PoK in which several protestors have been killed and many injured," Jaiswal added.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal —*PTI*

Meanwhile, on Monday India hit out at Pakistan at the UN, slamming Islamabad's decision to refer to groups inside its own borders as 'Fitna al-Hindustan' as nothing but "officially sponsored misinformation dressed up in religious terminology."

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Harish Parvathaneni, issued a strong statement against Pakistan here during a UN Security Council meeting on the 'Situation in Afghanistan'.

Last year, the government of Pakistan officially designated all armed groups operating in Balochistan as 'Fitna al Hindustan', alleging that the outfits indulged in terrorism at India's behest. —*PTI*

Khandre seeks G RAM G minimum wage hike

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Eshwar B Khandre has urged the Centre to increase minimum wages under the Viksit Bharat–G RAM G scheme, which will replace MGNREGA from 1 July. Participating in a video conference of state Rural Development Ministers chaired by Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Khandre said Karnataka has decided to revise minimum wages in view of rising prices and inflation and requested a similar enhancement under the rural employment programme. He said the Centre has made an interim allocation of Rs 5,709.90 crore to Karnataka under the scheme, which will follow a 60:40 funding pattern between the Union and State governments. Accordingly, Karnataka will have to contribute Rs 3,806.60 crore as its share. ***—SALAR NEWS***

Minor drives car, parents fined Rs 25,000

BELAGAVI, 9 JUNE

After recent fines of Rs 20,000 each on parents of minors caught riding two-wheelers, Belagavi Traffic Police have fined a minor Rs 25,000 for driving a car. The minor was intercepted near Rani Channamma Circle while driving, and police seized the vehicle. The boy was taken into custody, and the car was confiscated. Authorities issued a notice to the parents for allowing irresponsible vehicle use, endangering public safety. The police's decisive action has been widely appreciated by the public, reinforcing strict enforcement of traffic regulations and child safety measures in the region. ***—SALAR NEWS***

Driver, conductor save woman after suicide bid

CHIKKABALLAPUR, 9 JUNE

A KSRTC bus driver and conductor saved a 24-year-old woman from a suicide attempt aboard a bus from Devanahalli on Monday. The woman, Nirmala, is married to Raichur native Shekar, but had been living with her parents in Gowribidanur in Chikkaballapura district. Returning from a visit to her husband in Raichur, on Monday, she boarded a KSRTC bus at Devanahalli. As the bus began moving, Nirmala reportedly consumed a bottle of pills from her bag, triggering a physical reaction. Passengers noticed her distress and alerted the conductor, Sudhakar, who immediately instructed the driver, Narayanaswamy, to reroute the bus to the nearest private hospital. She was admitted and is currently recovering, hospital sources confirmed. ***—SALAR NEWS***

—INSTAGRAM

Guns N' Roses to play in City on 14 November

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Rock band Guns N' Roses will tour India this November as part of their 2026 World Tour, following their successful 2025 Mumbai performance. The band will perform in Bengaluru on 14 November and Guwahati on 17 November, with the shows produced and promoted by BookMyShow Live. Naman Pugalia, chief business officer of Live Events at BookMyShow, highlighted the band's influence, saying, "Some bands have shaped the history of rock music in the way Guns N' Roses have, and their influence continues to resonate across generations of fans worldwide." He added, "Their return is a testament to the continued growth of India's live entertainment ecosystem and the country's emergence as a vibrant cultural destination for world-class experiences." ***—PTI***

Rains bring havoc, red alert issued in 5 districts

Govt advises farmers from 7 districts to wait before sowing

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

People cover themselves during rainfall at Chikkamagaluru on Sunday; A bike being swept away by currents after heavy rain in Bailhongal, Belagavi in a video that surfaced on Tuesday ***PTI/SCREENGRAB***

Heavy rainfall was reported in several districts across the State, with the Meteorological Department forecasting heavy rains across Karnataka until 11 June.

A red alert has been issued for five districts: Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada, Shivamogga, and Chikkamagaluru. An orange alert has been declared for Kodagu, Hassan, Haveri, Belagavi, and Dharwad districts, and a yellow alert for Bidar, Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Vijayapura, Raichur, Koppal, Bagalkote, Davanagere, Mysuru, and Chamarajanagar districts.

However, rain had already begun battering several districts.

In Belagavi, social media users on X said that roads had been turned into rivers, with videos showing bikes being swept away. In Chikkamagaluru, a control room has been set up, and residents have been advised to stay away from rivers, streams and low-lying areas.

In Haveri, particularly Rattihalli, rainwater also inundated roads and disrupted traffic movement.

Continuous rainfall caused widespread disruption in parts of Chitradurga district. In Holalkere taluk, the Kariyammana Halla overflowed. A woman was also reportedly swept away in Ballari district on Sunday.

Bengaluru, meanwhile, is forecast to receive light-moderate rains over the next two-three days, according to the IMD.

Meanwhile, the Agricultural Department has advised farmers in North Karnataka to not rush into sowing operations, stating that the soil requires further moisture accumulation, adding that there was time until 15 July.

Officials said that the Belagavi division, covering the seven districts of Bagalkot, Belagavi, Vijayapura, Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri and Uttara Kannada needs an additional 50 to 75mm of rainfall, and the soil should be adequately wetted to a depth of about 5 to 6 inches below the surface for sowing.

Farmers had prepared for sowing in anticipation of the pre-monsoon rains. But they were deeply disappointed when the rains did not come on time. Then, at the end of the week, it rained for three consecutive days. Vinod Patil, a farmer from Chikkabagewadi, said that the rains had given hope that sowing could begin within a week. *—Salar News*

As Tothapuri mangoes sell for Rs 5/kg, Kolar farmers seek govt help

KOLAR, 9 JUNE

- Kolar DC Ravi urged the government to extend support through the PDPS like last year, where 15,103 farmers received assistance of Rs. 41.92 crore

Plummeting procurement prices for Tothapuri mangoes in wholesale markets have left mango growers in Kolar district facing severe financial distress. With wholesale prices dropping to as low as Rs 5 per kg—below the estimated production cost of Rs 8.55 per kg—farmers have urged government intervention.

In a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Cooperation Department, Kolar Deputy Commissioner Dr MR Ravi has sought the immediate implementation of the Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) for mango growers in the district.

Ravi noted that mangoes are cultivated on more than 45,000 hectares in Kolar, with Tothapuri (also known as the "Bengalura" mango) being the dominant variety.

He noted that adverse weather conditions have reduced the expected yield by nearly 50 per cent this season. Farmers are also struggling to market their produce due to limited processing infrastructure, as Kolar has only four mango processing units with a combined capacity of around 900 metric tonnes.

As a result, they are compelled to transport their produce to neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, which has 41 processing units with a combined capacity of about 12,300 metric tonnes, but the procurement prices there are unremunerative. Ravi urged the government to extend support through the PDPS like last year, where 15,103 farmers received assistance totalling Rs. 41.92 crore. *—Salar News*

Ujjwala cut to cost Rs 900 cr to K'taka women: Surjewala

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala alleged that the reduction in the number of subsidised cooking gas cylinders under the Ujjwala scheme would impose an additional annual burden of about Rs 900 crore on women in Karnataka alone.

The government has reduced the number of subsidised cooking gas cylinders available annually to beneficiaries of its flagship Ujjwala scheme to four, aligning support with average household consumption levels.

"The Central Government has effectively taken away eight subsidised cylinders every year from poor women. As a result, each beneficiary family stands to lose Rs 2,400 annually," Surjewala said in a video statement.

Terming this an "anti-people" decision, he claimed that it will impose an additional burden of Rs 24,792 crore every year on women across the country. "How are poor and middle-class women expected to bear this burden?"

Surjewala alleged that this decision will inevitably push many women back towards using firewood and traditional stoves. "In Karnataka there are 37.5 lakh Ujjwala beneficiaries, and this move will impose an additional Rs 900 crore annual burden on women in the State."

Surjewala said that in 2014, during the Congress-led UPA government, a domestic LPG cylinder cost around Rs 400. Now, the price is nearing Rs 1,000. *—PTI*

Cong wants to drive JD(S)-BJP apart: HDK

MANDYA, 9 JUNE

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy inaugurates classrooms for PM Shri Karnataka Public School in Srirangapatna, on Tuesday ***x @HD_KUMARASWAMY***

The Congress was attempting to create a divide between the JD(S) and BJP by making "sympathetic" remarks about former prime minister HD Deve Gowda not getting a Rajya Sabha seat, said former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy on Tuesday.

Congress leaders had accused the BJP of denying Deve Gowda a Rajya Sabha seat by fielding Prof M Nagaraja as its candidate from Karnataka.

"Everyone knows how they treated Gowda in his 70 years of political life... They are showing sympathy towards Deve Gowda because they are worried about the BJP-JD(S) alliance; they realise what will happen in the 2028 Assembly polls," Kumaraswamy, the JD(S) second-in-command told reporters in the City. "Did JD(S) or Deve Gowda ask for a Rajya Sabha seat?"

The Union Minister noted that the BJP has over 60 MLAs and asked "what will be the public opinion about Deve Gowda?" if the party demanded a Rajya Sabha seat for him.

Kumaraswamy added that all that the 93-year-old Deve Gowda needs is "good health from god".

The JD(S) leader also rejected the Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala claims that they had ensured Gowda's entry into the Rajya Sabha last time in June 2020. "Where did Congress have the number to put another candidate?"

He credited former chief minister Yediyurappa for fielding Deve Gowda during the polls.

Kumaraswamy also blamed the Congress for the collapse of the coalition government in 2019.

Asked whether he will be the CM if the BJP-JD(S) coalition comes to power in 2028, Kumaraswamy said, "More than becoming the CM, I want to save my people. So the coalition needs to be strengthened, that's my priority". *—PTI*

His doors have been open for 50yrs: HDK mocks DKS' tie up bid

MANDYA, 9 JUNE

JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy noted that DK Shivakumar was meeting former chief ministers, but indicated that he would not meet the new CM, stating that all the Kanakapura leader wanted was for a "photo to come in papers".

"When he (Shivakumar) addressed a gathering in Tumakuru recently, he said 'Kumaraswamy was twice CM. What has he done?' When I have done nothing, what suggestion can I offer? What advice can he get from me?" the Union Minister retorted.

Shivakumar had also said that his doors were open to JD(S) workers.

"He (Shivakumar) has kept his doors open for the past fifty years," Kumaraswamy quipped. *—PTI*

Shivakumar bites apple and throws them into a crowd; BJP mocks him

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

BJP on Tuesday criticised Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar for throwing half-eaten apples at supporters during a felicitation ceremony in his hometown, Kanakapura, in Bengaluru South.

In a viral social media video from the ceremony on Sunday, the newly inducted Chief Minister is seen biting two apples from a massive garland gifted to him after the grand felicitation in Kanakapura and throwing them at party workers before exiting the venue.

BJP re-posted the video on 'X' with the caption (translated from Hindi), "Throwing a half-bitten apple at the very public whose votes bring you to power is no joke—it's a mirror to the Congress mindset."

BJP further said, "Respect isn't shown through words, but through behaviour. The public doesn't beg for charity; it demands respect. And when arrogance takes the place of respect, the public responds in kind."

LoP in the Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy quipped on X that Shivakumar was attempting to signal to Congress workers that "once I have eaten something and thrown it away, then it is yours".

There was no immediate reaction from the Congress or the Chief Minister's office over the issue. *—PTI*

HEGDE GIVEN FULL HONOURS

LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and his predecessor Siddaramaiah pay respects to late Suraj Hegde, on Tuesday, a day after he passed away. Hegde was an AICC Secretary and the grandson of ex-chief minister D Devaraj Urs ***—SALAR***

Sankranti land grab: Ex-MLA alleges Malur scam

KOLAR, 9 JUNE

Former Legislator from Malur KS Manjunatha Gowda has alleged that revenue documents were forged to grab over 16 acres of government land in 1963.

Speaking to press after presenting a memorandum to the Malur Tahsildar Roopa seeking a suspension of concerned officials, Gowda alleged that records were forged to show it as land sanctioned to Ashok Jain of Bengaluru on the 14th of January in 1993, which was incidentally Sankranti, a General Holiday. Notably, the land had been earmarked as government land as early as 1961.

Furthermore, he alleged that until 2024, there were no mention of any documents pertaining to the land. But in 2024 someone applied for a certified copy. The Shirastedar in charge of the land then recorded that there was some "suspicion", the BJP leader alleged.

Gowda called for thorough investigations, warning of a dharna if no action was taken against erring officers.

It may be noted that the land issue has drawn attention from various quarters. BJP leader and former minister Suresh Kumar also visited Kolar and urged the Deputy Commissioner to initiate a suitable inquiry into the alleged land grab incident involving 16 acres of land at Thornahalli village in Malur taluk. *—Salar News*

'IT'S A CLEAN BUILDING'

Concerns about rehab centres for Kogilu evictees fictional: HC

BENGALURU, 9 JUNE

—MOHAMMED ASAD

A Karnataka High Court bench of Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice KS Hemalekha on Tuesday said concerns raised by residents of Yelahanka's Kogilu Layout about the quality of the rehabilitation centre provided by the state after their houses were demolished were "fictional".

The court was hearing a PIL by residents of the Waseem Layout and Fakir Colony who said that the 20 December, 2025 demolition drive in the area violated Supreme Court guidelines and left those who had lived there for decades homeless. They asked for a survey of, and compensation for, affected residents, Bar and Bench reported.

Their counsel added that the centre is too far away from Kogilu Layout, could barely house 100 people, and does not have proper washrooms. The counsel added that the court's amicus curiae BV Vidyulatha's interviews with residents who had actually used the centre will show further issues.

However, the bench said that photographs of the centre did not show them being used by residents, though it had a capacity to house around 130 people. It also added that many mattresses were available and that it "is a clean building".

The bench added that it may not be "feasible" to find such a centre closer to Kogilu Layout and claiming that people will suffer in the monsoon and have no place to go seems correct. *—Agencies*

Man kills wife, son; dies by suicide over EMI loan

MANDYA, 9 JUNE

A 65-year-old man allegedly murdered his wife and son before hanging himself at his clothing shop, police said. The deceased were Prabhakar: his wife Jyothi, 55; and their son Santosh, 28. He also left a suicide note citing business losses and pressure to repay home loan EMIs. The incident occurred around 6am. Prabhakar had allegedly killed his wife and son at their house before going to his shop.

When asked about the note citing the free bus scheme as a reason for business loss, the SP said Prabhakar had written that increased bus service frequency had adversely affected his business. Police suspect he strangled his wife and son before hanging himself. Santosh had married Meghana on 26 April. *—PTI*

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TMC leaders say rebel MPs have BJP links

Kalyan says if rebels are unhappy with TMC, they should quit instead of backing NDA

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

- Kalyan Banerjee claimed that the BJP "will not take them," and asked why the dissident Trinamool MPs were not formally merging with the BJP

Trinamool Congress (TMC) leaders Kalyan Banerjee and Kirti Azad on Tuesday at a press confrence launched a blistering attack on rebel party Members of Parliament (MPs).

Banerjee said the TMC had called the briefing after dissident MPs claimed support from a majority of the party's Lok Sabha members and announced plans to seek recognition as a separate faction. Rebel Lok Sabha MP Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar also said on Monday that 20 MPs of the group had decided to write to Speaker Om Birla declaring support for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Referring to former TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, who resigned from the Upper House after levelling allegations against the party, Banerjee said the rebel MPs should follow the same course and maintain political morality.

Banerjee also accused the rebel leaders of effectively aligning themselves with the BJP, after some of them met Union minister and BJP's West Bengal election in-charge Bhupender Yadav in the presence of West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari.

Kalyan Banerjee claimed that the BJP "will not take them," questioning why the dissident MPs were not formally merging with the party. He added that they should face party workers in their constituencies, who are facing harassment by the administration.

"(Minister of Home Affairs) Amit Shah is working to break the party," he charged, alleging that Shah contacted TMC MP Yusuf Pathan.

Banerjee lashed out at some rebel leaders for their lack of gratitude towards the party leadership. "Kakoli (Ghosh Dastidar) lost five elections, yet Mamata Banerjee made her an MP," he alleged.

He claimed that several leaders, who are now criticising the party, had expressed loyalty to Mamata Banerjee until recently, asking, "If you had grievances, why didn't you say so before 4 May?" —*PTI*

TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee speaks during a press conference in New Delhi on Tuesday —*PTI*

—PTI

Brinda takes up student's case with Delhi Police

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

CPI(M) leader Brinda Karat has written to Delhi Police Commissioner Satish Golchha, alleging illegal surveillance and harassment of a young woman by officers from New Rajinder Nagar police station. The postgraduate student was reportedly picked up from a gym on 5 June, questioned about her political views, warned against attending a CJP protest, and placed under surveillance without any legal basis. Police allegedly demanded her phone, checked messages, and monitored her movements, amounting to "virtual house arrest." Karat called it "wholly illegal" and questioned if others had faced similar harassment, urging action against those involved. The police are yet to respond. —*PTI*

NIA conducts raids in Punjab to bust terror hideouts

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The NIA conducted raids across nine districts in Punjab and Haryana, targeting three terror-gangster cases linked to Pakistan-based terrorist Shahzad Bhatti. Search teams examined 18 locations, seized digital devices and documents, and collected information on communication networks and financial transactions. Notices were issued to individuals to join investigations, as the agency probes a cross-border conspiracy. The investigation traces Bhatti's involvement in the March 2025 grenade attack in Jalandhar, and the explosions at Sirsa's Women Police Station and Ambala's Baldev Nagar police station. The NIA aims to unravel the network's links to terror activities and its Pakistani connections.—*PTI*

Tejashwi slams Bihar CM's 'cheap politics'

PATNA, 9 JUNE

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav criticised Bihar's NDA government for downgrading security for his family and reallocating Rabri Devi's bungalow to a minister. He accused Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary of engaging in "cheap politics" and claimed law and order had "completely collapsed". Yadav condemned the state's move to allot Rabri Devi's residence and criticised the government's focus on patronising "corrupt officials and criminals". He added, "The NDA government is least bothered about the people's problems," alleging the state's economy is in a "pathetic condition". He also condemned the security downgrade for Lalu Prasad and Rabri Devi, suggesting it's politically motivated. —*PTI*

India is no dharamshala, says UP CM Yogi

LUCKNOW, 9 JUNE

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday that India cannot be a "dharamshala" for people who have no faith in the country or respect its traditions.He also called for vigilance against "love jihad," religious conversion conspiracies and "land jihad."- Speaking at the closing ceremony of a nine-day Shri Ram Katha Mahotsav narrated by Jagadguru Ramanandacharya Swami Rambhadracharya in Lucknow, Adityanath said Lord Ram's ideals continue to unite the country.The chief minister said Lord Ram was one figure capable of uniting every Indian irrespective of region, and this was why the Ram Janmabhoomi movement continued for centuries. He said many saints had made the Janmabhoomi cause a matter of "life and death," not for personal gains but because of their commitment towards preserving India's heritage.—*PTI*

Didi meets Sonia amid TMC rebellion

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

A day after an opposition INDIA bloc meeting stressed unity and better coordination among the alliance partners, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi at her 10, Janpath residence.

Sources said the two leaders are learnt to have discussed the strategy between the two parties going forward after the opposition bloc meeting.

The meeting followed after Gandhi, the chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party, and Banerjee met each other warmly with a hug at the opposition bloc's meeting here on Monday. Congress shared pictures of the bonhomie between the two.

The meeting comes in the wake of a rebellion within the Trinamool, with several party MPs deciding to form a separate group and align with the ruling NDA.

This was the first closed-door meeting between Banerjee and Gandhi after the TMC's defeat in the polls, and alleged attacks on party workers and MP Abhishek after the elections. —*PTI*

Congress MP Sonia Gandhi talking to TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee during the INDIA bloc meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday —*PTI*

TMC LEADER SABYASACHI HELD IN EXTORTION CASE

KOLKATA, 9 JUNE

Trinamool Congress leader and former Bidhannagar mayor Sabyasachi Dutta was arrested on Tuesday from his Raigachi residence in North 24 Parganas on charges of extortion and criminal intimidation.

Police said the arrest followed a businessman's complaint alleging that Dutta had demanded more than Rs 1 crore from him in 2018. A Bidhannagar court remanded Dutta to eight days' police custody.

Dutta denied the allegations, saying he was "ready to be hanged" if it is proved he had taken even one rupee.

Crowds shouted "thief" and hurled eggs, tomatoes and cow dung at him while he was being taken to and from court.

TMC leader Sabyasachi Dutta being produced in a Kolkata court after his arrest from North 24 Parganas district for extortion—*PTI*

Dutta, who unsuccessfully contested the Assembly election from Barasat, had briefly joined the BJP in 2019 before returning to the Trinamool Congress. —*PTI*

PMLA CASE

CPI(M) distances itself from Veena

T'PURAM, 9 JUNE

The ED summons to **T Veena**, daughter of former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in a money-laundering case triggered reactions on Tuesday, with CPI(M) leaders seeking to distance the party from the matter.

Reacting to the development, CPI(M) Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas said the law should take its own course in the matter.

The ED summoned Veena and officials of the sand mining company CMRL for questioning in a money laundering case.

Officials said Veena has been asked to depose at the ED's zonal office here on 12 June.

The investigation pertains to irregularities in CMRL's financial transactions and its links with Veena's now-defunct company Exalogic Solutions Private Limited.

The ED is probing an allegation that CMRL made fraudulent payments of Rs 2.78 crore to Exalogic in the name of 'IT consultancy services'.

Empower India Capital Investment Private Limited operated by Kartha had also given loans of Rs 50 lakh to Exalogic despite its failure to make repayments.

The PMLA case was filed in March 2024 after the ED took cognisance of a complaint registered by the SFIO which later filed a prosecution complaint before an Ernakulam court in April 2025. The CMRL was caught by Central agencies after an IT raid in January 2019, which unearthed fake expenses of Rs 130 crore.

ED says the company "inflated" expenditure by Rs 133.82 crore by booking "bogus" cash expenses under the heads 'transportation' and 'sludge handling' between 2012-13 and 2018-19, which was used to bribe politicians, parties and the media. —*PTI*

Op Blue Star a black day, says BJP minister

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

Maharashtra minister and senior BJP leader Girish Mahajan has triggered a controversy by describing Operation Blue Star as a "black day" and referring to those killed in the 1984 military action as "martyrs" during an event at Damdami Taksal in Amritsar.

Mahajan, the first representative of any state government to attend the anniversary commemoration, termed the operation a "military attack" on the Golden Temple and likened it to Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion of the shrine. He alleged that then prime minister Indira Gandhi forcibly sent the Army into the complex and said those responsible for the tragedy were never punished. Operation Blue Star, conducted between 1 June and 10, 1984, aimed to flush out Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and armed militants from the Golden Temple complex. —*PTI*

Vijay inaugurates police unit 'Singappen' to protect women

Tamil Nadu CM Joseph Vijay presents an insignia during the inauguration of the special police unit, 'Singappen,' in Chennai on Tuesday—*PTI*

CHENNAI, 9 JUNE

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Tuesday inaugurated a special police unit, 'Singappen,' to provide enhanced safety to women.

Vijay unveiled the insignia for the special force tasked to prevent crimes against women and children. The CM flagged off special vehicles for the special force, and he himself drove a vehicle for a short distance.

In his address, Vijay said that for the first time in the country, drone-based 'patrol' will be undertaken by the special unit for women's safety.

Asserting that there will be zero tolerance for crimes against women, he assured swift action and tough punishment.

Stating that crimes against women caused deep distress, he said such crimes and the prevalence of drugs were interlinked and stressed that the drug menace must be eradicated. For the special unit, the chief minister said that over Rs 354 crore is to be allocated in the first phase and in the second phase, 2,500 new posts will be created for the new unit. —*PTI*

No action against 21 AIADMK MLAs

CHENNAI, 9 JUNE

Days after AIADMK factions patched up, Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker JCD Prabhakar announced on Tuesday that no action will be taken against the 21 MLAs from the opposition party who voted in favour of the TVK government during the 13 May floor test.

The decision follows a formal request from AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS) to drop the matter.

Speaking to reporters at the secretariat, Prabhakar said that after considering the request, it was decided that the 21 AIADMK MLAs will not be disqualified.

Following the speaker's decision these legislators will continue as MLAs without facing action under anti-defection laws.

On the fate of four AIADMK MLAs who resigned and joined the TVK, Prabhakar said action has been taken against them. —*PTI*

'LDF govt signed PM SHRI, got Rs 93 cr'

PALAKKAD, 9 JUNE

Keralam Education Minister N Samsudheen stated that the previous LDF government signed an MoU with the Centre for the PM SHRI scheme and received Rs 93 crore during its tenure. He refuted allegations that the UDF was spreading misinformation, asserting, "There is no factual mistake; the MoU was signed, and Rs 93 crore was released." The minister added the present government had not entered into any new agreement, only keeping the scheme in abeyance.

CPI(M) leader V Sivankutty had claimed Kerala had not received funds, which Samsudheen dismissed. BJP's K Surendran criticised delays, arguing the scheme should be implemented. —*PTI*

Sena sore over non-invite of DyCMs to event

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

Shiv Sena ministers on Tuesday expressed displeasure over Maharashtra deputy chief ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar not being invited for the **inauguration of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue** at the Navi Mumbai international airport, sources said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis told them during a cabinet meeting that he had ordered an inquiry into this, the sources claimed.

Fadnavis unveiled the statue on 6 June, the 352nd anniversary of the warrior king's 1674 coronation.

Shiv Sena ministers Sanjay Shirsat, Shambhuraj Desai and Pratap Sarnaik raised the issue as soon as the cabinet meeting started, the sources said.

Fadnavis said he realised that Shinde and Pawar had not been invited when he reached the venue and ordered an inquiry, they added. The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and Sunetra Pawar-led NCP are part of the BJP-led ruling alliance in the state. — *PTI*

WITH INDIA IN DISARRAY

Govt may give delimitation law fresh push

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Political upheaval within key Opposition parties has rekindled hopes in the BJP-led NDA of reviving the pending delimitation legislation needed to implement women's reservation in legislatures before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections.

Government sources said the changing parliamentary arithmetic is being assessed after major splits in the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), along with the DMK distancing itself from the INDIA bloc following its differences with the Congress over developments in Tamil Nadu.

Government sources said the changing parliamentary arithmetic is being assessed after major splits in the TMC and AAP—*PTI*

The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, which proposed increasing Lok Sabha strength from 543 to a maximum of 850 seats and operationalising 33 per cent reservation for women, was defeated in the Lok Sabha on April 17. The bill secured 298 votes in favour and 230 against, falling 54 votes short of the required two-thirds majority of 352 among the 528 members who voted.

According to sources, 20 of the TMC's 28 Lok Sabha MPs have rebelled and extended support to the NDA, pushing the ruling alliance's strength beyond the 300-mark in the Lower House. In the Rajya Sabha, seven of AAP's 10 MPs have joined the BJP, strengthening the NDA's position.

While the women's reservation amendment was defeated, the delimitation bill and a related measure for implementing reservations in Union Territories with legislatures remain pending before Parliament.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal recently indicated that the women's quota law would be implemented before the 2029 elections. The proposed legislation envisages a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census and a corresponding increase in Lok Sabha, state Assembly and Union Territory Assembly seats to accommodate women's reservation. —*PTI*

Rs 95,692 cr cleared for VB G RAM G scheme

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The Centre on Tuesday announced an interim allocation of Rs 95,692 crore under the new Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Grameen) (VB G RAM G), which will replace MGNREGS from 1 July. Rural Development Minister Chouhan said the allocation would ensure a seamless transition while draft rules are finalised, stressing that no state would face a cut in funds and there would "not be a day" without work for rural labourers.

Of the total allocation, states will receive Rs 92,550.17 crore and Union Territories Rs 1,291.52 crore, while Rs 1,850.62 crore has been earmarked for administration and social audits. With mandatory state contributions, the scheme's annual outlay is expected to reach around Rs 1.51 lakh crore. UP received the highest allocation at Rs 9,721.48 crore, followed by West Bengal (Rs 8,508 crore), Andhra Pradesh (Rs 7,707.21 crore), Tamil Nadu (Rs 7,585.49 crore), Rajasthan (Rs 7,581.87 crore) and Bihar (Rs 6,715.83 crore).

Chouhan said 26 states have completed implementation formalities, while Jharkhand, Karnataka, Telangana and Mizoram are yet to do so. States have been asked to notify the scheme, complete e-KYC, frame rules and undertake awareness campaigns.

On West Bengal, Chouhan said the new government had agreed to comply with central conditions. However, disputes over pending MGNREGS dues remain unresolved. He added that provisions for additional employment during droughts and other emergencies would continue. — *PTI*

— PTI

Security forces seize Maoists' weapons in Odisha

MALKANGIRI, 9 JUNE

Security forces have recovered a large cache of arms, ammunition, and explosives from a Maoist dump on the Odisha-Chhattisgarh border, a police officer said. Based on surrendered Maoist inputs, the District Voluntary Force (DVF) and Border Security Force (BSF) conducted searches in Kirmitti and Katuapadar forests under Mathili police limits, bordering Bastar's Durva police station. During the operation, they recovered a huge quantity of weapons, including one INSAS light machine gun, two INSAS rifles, two tiffin bombs, an 8kg IED, grenade, AK magazine, gunpowder, battery, and electric detonator. The police believe explosives were intended for Maoist cadres to target civilians and security personnel, a significant blow to Maoist activities. —*PTI*

Over 20 booked for attacking UP non-veg dhaba

MUZAFFARNAGAR, 9 JUNE

Around 20 activists, including the district president of a Hindu youth organisation, have been booked for vandalising a non-vegetarian roadside eatery, police said. The dhaba is situated near Sisona village on the Delhi-Dehradun highway, under Chapar police jurisdiction. Police officer Ravishankar confirmed that, acting on the owner Azad's complaint, a case was registered against members of Hindu Raksha Dal, including youth wing leader Hemant Sharma. The suspects allegedly entered the dhaba, removed and burnt the flex board, assaulted employees, damaged property, and threatened to block the upcoming Kawad Yatra, which is scheduled to commence in a few months. —*PTI*

Court acquits 11 men in assault case after 13 years

THANE, 9 JUNE

Nearly thirteen years after a violent clash over sand dredging left some injured, Thane's sessions court acquitted eleven men accused of attempted murder, citing the benefit of doubt. Judge RS Bhakare stated the victims' medical certificates showed injuries, but the attackers' identities remained unconfirmed. The incident occurred on 12 December, 2013, when a group allegedly attacked Bholanath Munde and others with swords and bamboo sticks on Diva-Agasan Road over a dredging dispute. The case collapsed as witnesses failed to identify the attackers, claiming they were assaulted by "unknown persons." All eleven accused were consequently acquitted, with the court citing insufficient evidence.—*PTI*

UP man, minor sons kill daughters over 'honour'

BIKANER, 9 JUNE

In a suspected case of honour killing, Ramprasad Mallah and his minor sons, aged 12 and 14, are accused of beating his two daughters to death in Pipraghat village. The police said Mallah, a resident of Devnarayan Tola, allegedly killed Lali, 20 and Sheila, 18, over their relationships with local youths. The daughters had earlier run away with their partners but returned six months ago; a village panchayat had been held. On Monday evening, Mallah, with his sons' help, allegedly locked the sisters in a room and beat them up severely. The father and other family members are absconding, and police have detained the minors and are investigating. —*PTI*

Longest road tunnel sees breakthrough

Zojila tunnel will link J&K & Ladakh

MINIMARG, 9 JUNE

The Zojila tunnel connecting the Kashmir Valley to Ladakh took a crucial step towards completion on Tuesday with a blast breaking through the last 2.5 metres of the high-altitude infrastructure project that cuts through the Himalayas.

With this, the two ends of the world's longest single-tube bi-directional bypass, which will cut travel time from 1.5 hours to 15 minutes, have now been connected, officials said.

The breakthrough has brought the decades-old dream of all-weather connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh closer to reality.

The tunnel will also boost India's defence capabilities as it is an all-weather passage that will remain open even during winter.

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari pressed the remote button, blasting the breakthrough site near the East Portal of the tunnel at Minimarg in Ladakh, they said.

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah were also present.

Officials of the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) said the breakthrough is six months ahead of schedule.

J&K Lt. Gov. Manoj Sinha, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and CM Omar Abdullah during the Zojila tunnel's breakthrough ceremony in Ladakh—*PTI*

As of now, about 85 per cent of the work has been completed, Authority Engineer for the project, Yousef Es'haghpour Rahimabadi, told PTI here.

The tunnel is likely to be thrown open to the public in February 2028, the officials said, adding that after the breakthrough, the civil works will take another 7 to 8 months and then the electrical works will begin.

The tunnel, 9.5 metre wide, 7.57 metre high, 13.153 km long, is a horseshoe-shaped single-tube, a two-lane road tunnel built at a height of around 11,578 feet above sea level.

The geo-strategically important tunnel on the Srinagar-Leh NH will provide all-weather connectivity to Ladakh, officials said.

Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL), the agency executing the project, used the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM) to pierce through the Himalayas and navigate the fragile geology. — *PTI*

U'khand Dalit youth tortured to death

NEW TEHRI, 9 JUNE

His nails were pulled out with pliers, iron nails were driven into his feet, and severe wounds were dealt to his genitals, the father of a Dalit boy who was allegedly killed over an intercaste affair claimed.

Villagers mobbed the Baurari District Hospital here on Tuesday where the boy died. The family of the 18-year-old refused to accept his body for the last rites until all his attackers were arrested.

The Uttarakhand government announced compensation of Rs 8.25 lakh for the family.

Police said, the victim, Ketan Lal, was reportedly friends with a girl for the past six months.

On Sunday, the girl called Ketan to her village. Ketan went to Kholgarh with a friend, Diwakar Dimri.

When they arrived, members of the girl's family locked them in a room and assaulted them with sticks.

Ketan was subjected to extreme physical torture, leaving deep bruises covering his back, chest, and limbs, his family claimed. The police have arrested the girl's father, Yashveer Singh, and her grandfather, Vidya Singh. —*PTI*

Andhra Minister Nara Lokesh and Union Minister of State Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma meet the kin of workers killed in the Vizag accident—*PTI*

Vizag blast not due to operational fault: Nara

VISAKHAPATNAM, 9 JUNE

Andhra Pradesh IT Minister Nara Lokesh on Tuesday said the explosion at the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant was not caused by a shortage of workers or any operational processing fault.

A sudden severe explosion in Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (Vizag Steel Plant) in Vizag killed eight workers and injured six more on 8 June.

"The accident did not occur due to a shortage of workers in the steel plant. There were no faults in the processing," said Lokesh in a press release.

While emphasising that RINL utilises the best Russian technology, he said it is not known why the ladle exploded with a loud noise.

He promised to take action once a committee submits its report on the disaster and to ensure that accidents of this nature do not recur.

Rejecting the idea that the government would not wash off its hands by declaring an ex-gratia, the TDP working president assured that the administration would stand by the victims' families "forever."

After inspecting the site, Lokesh claimed that the TDP-led government has managed to "save" the steel plant through a Rs 15,000-crore package and resumed production.

The Centre announced an ex-gratia of Rs 25 lakh for the families of the victims, and permanent employment to one family member and other relief measures, Union Steel Minister HD Kumaraswamy said.

Flames erupt at the Vizag steel plant after molten iron spilt while being moved in a bucket by a crane in Visakhapatnam—*PTI*

Further, Lokesh underlined that RINL also needs a slurry pipeline and claimed that no trade union leader raised this matter.

During Lokesh's visit, an argument broke out between him and a left leader, CPI(M) Srinivas Rao, and others representing the victims, according to vernacular television channels footage aired widely.

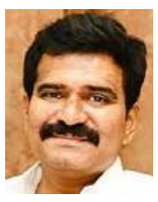
According to the YSRCP leader, Lokesh's response to the queries raised by trade union leaders were "insensitive", hinting at the IT Minister's reply to a trade union leader that "none of your family members had died in the accident." — *PTI*

TN minister blames 'sabotage' for power outages

CHENNAI, 9 JUNE

Tamil Nadu Electricity Minister CTR Nirmal Kumar on Tuesday blamed "deliberate sabotage" behind the frequent power outages in the city and suburbs, claiming some people intentionally pulled fuses or caused blackouts to incite public protest.

The officials were assessing the frequency and location of power failure, and utilising existing CCTV footage, to detect suspicious and repetitive patterns, and identify individuals tampering with equipment, he said, adding that that public vigilance was crucial in areas lacking CCTV coverage.



He explained that real-time status updates on power failures were being provided on social media through the 'Minnagam' portal. Meanwhile, the state government has increased ground-level teams and intensified patrolling.

"Complaints are being filed against individuals caught tampering with power infrastructure with some arrests already reported," he said, responding to reporters' questions.

Prolonged power failures lasting through late Saturday made the residents in several parts of Chennai and suburbs spend a sleepless night. Some residents, frustrated over the outages that lasted for two to four hours, resorted to protests. — *PTI*

Ex-M'rashtra min challenges CBSE's 3-language rule in SC

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

A fresh plea has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging a CBSE policy mandating the study of three languages, including two Indian languages, for Class 9 students beginning 1 July. The plea filed by Dr Fauzia Khan, an educationist and former Maharashtra minister, contends that the CBSE's 15 May circular is unreasonable.

"The impugned circular acknowledges this teacher shortage in its own text, yet proceeds to mandate compliance. The result is that the only practical purpose served by the impugned circular, in the southern States, is compulsory Hindi, and in the northern states, compulsory Sanskrit," the plea said. Khan, who belongs to the NCP-SCP party, said forcing non-Hindi states to introduce Hindi or Sanskrit violates the National Education Policy 2020. The SC had on 27 May had issued notice on a plea challenging the CBSE policy mandating the study of three languages.

According to a recent circular issued by the CBSE, the study of three languages, including at least two Indian languages, has been made compulsory for Class 9 students beginning 1 July. — *PTI*

NTA, NMC officials to face panel today over NEET re-exam

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Top officials of the Health and Education ministries, National Testing Agency and the National Medical Commission will brief a parliamentary panel on Wednesday over the conduct of the NEET-UG re-examination on 21 June.

The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare has summoned the secretaries of Higher Education and Health, besides top officials of the NTA and NMC, to brief the panel on the NEET re-exam.

This is the third parliamentary panel before whom the top officials of the ministries and NTA (National Testing Agency) and NMC (National Medical Commission) are appearing.

Top officials of the Union Health and Education ministries, as well as that of the NTA and NMC, have already appeared before the Parliamentary Committees and told them that their focus was on holding the 21 June NEET-UG re-test.

CBI Director Sood also deposed before a panel about the progress made in the probe into the NEET-UG paper leak case and the steps being taken to arrest all those behind the leakage. — *PTI*

CJI for mediation, says arbitration facing hurdles

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

While delivering a lecture on "Mediation, Arbitration and the Courts: Converging Trends in the Indian and English Approaches in Commercial Dispute Resolution" at the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom on Monday, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said mediation is no longer an alternative but an essential instrument to achieve timely, amicable and lasting resolution of disputes.

"Over the last several decades, arbitration has indubitably come to be viewed across jurisdictions as a response to some of the perceived limitations of court-centric adjudication," he said.

But, he continued, it is his "earnest belief that as international arbitration has increasingly mirrored the very procedural complexities it was designed to escape, it is mediation that now emerges as the authentic frontier of commercial agility."

The Chief Justice said that in India, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act came into existence in 1996.

Indian courts have repeatedly reaffirmed the principle of minimal judicial intervention for preserving the sanctity of arbitral proceedings, he said. —*PTI*

Patna court stays arrest of Khan Sir

PATNA, 9 JUNE

A Patna court on Tuesday stayed the arrest of educator Faisal Khan, popularly known as 'Khan Sir', till further orders, his lawyer said.

Khan was named in an FIR related to a firing incident by his guards a week ago when his coaching institute was allegedly vandalised by a bunch of miscreants.

Khan Sir's lawyer Arvind Kumar Mouar told reporters in Patna that the court has asked for the case diary and other antecedents to be presented on the next hearing. The educator had filed a plea for anticipatory bail on Monday.

The court also asked for the case diary and antecedents in connection with the two guards who were detained by police on Thursday, Mouar said.

"Their case is scheduled for tomorrow. The hearing will take place after the case diary is presented before the court," the lawyer said.

The educator has received "protection from coercive action" and will cooperate with investigating officers. —*PTI*

WAYANAD EPIDEMIC

Kerala steps up hygiene drive after Shigella infection cases

KOZHIKODE/WAYANAD, 9 JUNE

Kerala Health Minister K Muraleedharan urged local bodies on Tuesday to strengthen hygiene and sanitation after reports of Shigella infections in Wayanad district.

Speaking about the situation at a function in Kozhikode, he said poor sanitation and contaminated food or water can increase the risk of disease. He stressed the need for strict cleanliness standards in public places, including roadside eateries.

Muraleedharan also said that unhygienic roadside eateries (thattukadas) would be shut down.

He said that illnesses linked to contaminated food and water can sometimes lead to serious complications. He called on panchayats and municipal corporations to carry out regular cleaning drives and ensure proper waste management.

Health authorities in Wayanad have stepped up containment measures after Shigella infection was confirmed in two students of a school in Sulthan Bathery.

The cases have put the health department and district administration on alert, prompting extensive surveillance, sanitation drives and public health interventions in the affected areas. Officials said the situation is under control.

District Medical Officer KT Rekha said 158 people had sought treatment at government and private hospitals.

Of them, 68 are undergoing treatment, including 26 at the Government Medical College and 42 at private hospitals.

Another 163 people were treated and later discharged after their condition improved, Rekha said.

Shigella is a bacterial infection that can cause diarrhoea and stomach cramps. It spreads through food, water or contact with infected individuals. — *PTI*

24 Indians rescued from ship off Oman: ICG

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Twenty-four Indian crew members of a Palau-flagged merchant tanker have been rescued in coordination with Omani authorities, following a "missile attack" on the vessel off the coast of Oman, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) said on Tuesday.

On 8 June, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Mumbai, of the ICG received information from a crew member about a missile attack on the tanker MT Marivex, while the vessel was anchored off Masirah, Oman, it said in a statement.

The Oman Maritime Search and Rescue Centre (OMSC), on the request of the MRCC, initiated and coordinated the rescue operation by diverting a nearby vessel and deploying two rescue helicopters to the incident area, the Coast Guard added.

Continuous coordination was maintained between the Mumbai and Oman rescue centres and other relevant stakeholders to monitor the developing situation and ensure the safety of the Indian crew.

The rescued crew members are reported to be safe—*PTI*

Later on 8 June, the OMSC confirmed that all the crew members had been safely rescued by helicopters of the Oman Navy, it said.

The rescued crew members are reported to be safe, and no casualties or injuries have been reported. The vessel is presently anchored off Masirah, Oman, the ICG authorities said. —*PTI*

IT'S BIGGER. IS IT BETTER?

A COMPARISON BETWEEN 1994 & 2026 WORLD CUPS IN US

A look at differences between the 1994 World Cup, the first in the United States, and the 2026 tournament, which will be played in the US, Mexico and Canada from 11 June through the final on 19 July:

Ticket prices
1994: Ticket prices ranged from $25 to $75 for first-round games ($40-$120 for the opener), and from $180 to $475 for the final at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.
2026: When FIFA put individual game tickets on sale in December, prices ranged from $140 to $2,735 for first-round games and from $4,185 to $8,680 for the final. This was the first World Cup with so-called dynamic pricing, meaning the price reflects real or perceived demand. FIFA raised the top price for the final to $10,990 in April.

Tournament size
1994: The tournament was the last World Cup with 24 teams. The field expanded to 32 in 1998.
2026: The tournament expanded again to 48 this year when a new round of 32 was established. The finalists will play eight games, up from seven.

Field size
1994: At the time, FIFA specified fields had to be 68-by-105 meters (74-by-115 yards) but allowed stadium operators to ignore that and keep narrower pitches.
2026: This time, stadiums have been modified to meet the standard.

Attendance
1994: The tournament drew a record 3.59 million, an average of 68,991 for 52 games.
2026: With twice as many matches this year, attendance of 6 million to 7 million is likely.

Geographic scope
1994: The 1994 tournament was played in nine stadiums, all in the US. The opener was played at Soldier Field in Chicago.
2026: This time, 16 stadiums are being used: 11 in the US three in Mexico and two in Canada. All games from the quarterfinals on will be in the US.
No Chicago this time: The city wasn't interested, citing what it said was a lack of financial assurances by FIFA.

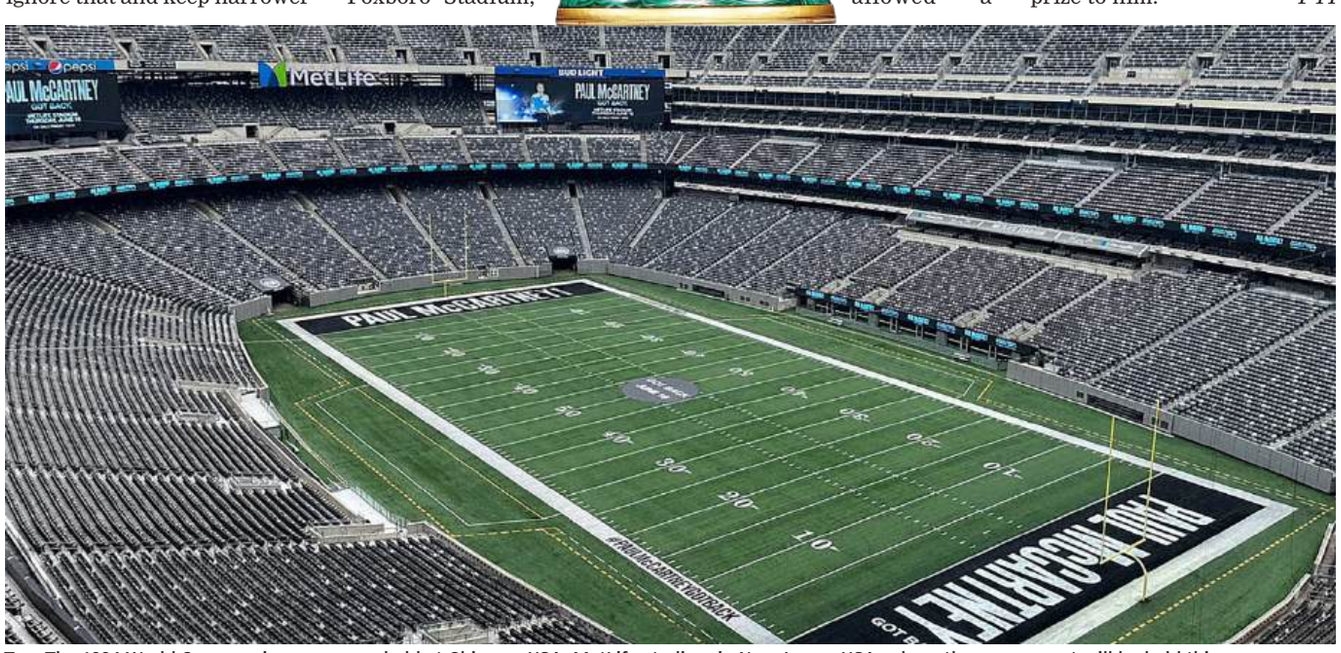
How suite it is
1994: The tournament used five NFL sites, including the since-demolished Giants Stadium, Foxboro Stadium, Pontiac Silverdome and RFK Stadium.
2026: The 11 US venues are all NFL stadiums with ample luxury suites and premium seating. Among the 1994 venues, Soldier Field remains along with the Rose Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Citrus Bowl and Stanford Stadium. None of those are being used for this World Cup.

Water breaks
1994: Teams played straight through in weather that at times was hot and humid.
2026: It will be hot and humid again, but this time games will have three-minute water breaks in each half, which coaches are likely to use as quick strategy sessions.

Substitutes
1994: Teams were allowed two substitutes, a rule first introduced for the 1990 tournament, and a new provision allowed a third for an injured goalkeeper or a keeper who received a red card. A third substitute was allowed starting in 1998 and in the event a game went to extra time, a fourth in 2018.
2026: Starting in 2022, each team may use five substitutes with a sixth possible in extra time and another at any point to replace a player who sustained a concussion.

Name game
Player names were added to jerseys for the 1994 tournament and have become standard in soccer. Uniform numbers became mandatory for the 1950 World Cup and fixed numbers that stayed the same throughout the tournament started in 1954. Numbers on shorts were required starting in 1974 and on the fronts of jerseys in 1994.

Who's in charge?
1994: A local organising committee largely ran World Cup arrangements through the 2022 tournament; World Cup USA 1994 was headed by Alan Rothenberg, a California lawyer who headed the U.S. Soccer Federation. Rothenberg travelled the country as chief salesman of the sport.
2026: FIFA is running this year's tournament and its president, Gianni Infantino, has been most visible ingratiating himself with U.S. President Donald Trump, even bestowing a FIFA peace prize to him. —*PTI*



Top: The 1994 World Cup opening ceremony held at Chicago, USA; MetLife stadium in New Jersey USA, where the mega event will be held this year— *FIFA/X*

SALAR سالار

AI 171 crash victims' kin grapple with flight fears

Almost a year after the AI 171 plane crash in Ahmedabad claimed 260 lives, grief has not faded for the victims' families as some still fear boarding a flight, while others are taking counselling to cope with the lasting trauma.

For many families and eyewitnesses, the tragedy did not end with the crash.

Diu resident Rafik Arab has not boarded a flight since losing his 25 year old son Faizan, one of the passengers on the London-bound plane on 12 June last year, and still lives with a deep fear of air travel.

Faizan had been pursuing Islamic studies in the UK and was travelling there after meeting his family in Diu. His last text to his father was: "Papa, I have boarded the flight and I am going".

Who could have imagined it would be his last text? Rafik told PTI.

"We haven't flown since that day. Even the sound of a plane overhead unsettles us, a reminder of how 260 lives vanished in seconds," he said.

Faizan's mother and two younger brothers continue to struggle with his absence. "They miss him a lot," Rafik said.

For Surat-based woman Mukti Vansadiya, the tragedy took away her parents, Divya, 60, and Arjunsinh, 65, and her peace. "My parents were my only light," she said.

Her parents were on their first international trip — and first time on an airplane — travelling to London to visit their elder daughter.

"It's a big thing for middle-class people to travel abroad. They were excited like children," she recalled.

The family had originally booked another connecting flight but later changed to the Ahmedabad departure so the elderly couple would feel more comfortable travelling with Gujarati-speaking passengers.

> Mukti Vansadiya, who lost both her parents, said, "Even thinking about airplanes brings a dull ache to my chest. I've resolved never to fly again."

The final moments before departure remain etched in Mukti's memory. "At the airport, I touched my mother's feet but forgot my father's. I ran back, touched his feet, and he patted my back. I can never forget that feeling — it was as if he was preparing me for a war," she said.

Hours later, while the siblings were having lunch in Vadodara, a phone call changed their lives forever.

Mukti, unmarried, struggled after losing her parents and now lives alone in Surat, while her siblings had already married before the tragedy.

The crash left Mukti battling depression. She quit her job at a travel agency and spent months in counselling. Today, she works as a social worker with a Tata Group CSR initiative.

"Whenever someone mentions airplanes, the trauma resurfaces and I grow anxious. Even thinking about it brings a dull ache to my chest," she admitted. "I've resolved never to fly again."

In Dhanera village of Banaskantha district, Savdhan Chaudhary, 50, still waits for a future that vanished in seconds. His son Kamlesh Chaudhary and daughter in law Dhapuben, both 26, were killed in the crash just six months after their marriage.

Kamlesh, who was settled in London, had returned to India to bring his wife after her spouse visa was approved. Kamlesh had promised to take his parents to London after Diwali and had even begun discussing retirement plans with them.

"He told us to slowly sell our livestock and stop working. He also wanted to help settle his younger brother in London," Savdhan recalled.

Kamlesh's mother now sits alone in a corner of a damp room while relatives visit their house for emotional support.

The life of Ajay Parmar, 28, an eyewitness, also changed completely. He was injured on the ground when the aircraft crashed into the Meghaninagar hostel complex. Riding home on his two wheeler after lunch, he suddenly found himself in the middle of the disaster.

"I suddenly heard a loud crash. Before I could understand anything, my hands and legs were burning," he remembered.

Parmar, who was then working as a gardener, abandoned his vehicle and ran in panic.

He spent two months in treatment for severe burns. Doctors have warned him against working under direct sunlight, making it impossible to continue his previous work. The financial strain only deepened his personal suffering.

His wife, whom he had married just a month before the crash, later left him. "She left as I could not work and my appearance had changed after the burns," Parmar rued.

"I still fear planes overhead. I witnessed that horrifying scene of nothing but fire, and sometimes I wake in the night unable to sleep again," he said. —*PTI*

It's been a year since AI 171 plane crashed in Ahmedabad, claiming 260 lives. But their families are still living with the trauma — *PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Body shaming Aishwarya at Cannes reveals how women are reduced to stereotypes

From epitomising the stereotype to breaking it, right on the most glittering of global showbiz events, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has sashayed down many a red carpet with poise and pizzazz. Not the Peter Pan-esque beauty but one setting benchmarks for aging gracefully – and happily.

She did so again in Cannes last month, becoming the centre of a furious debate on why women must be held to impossible standards, why they must conform to the expectation that they look the same year after year. Notwithstanding the vagaries of life and time.

As Alia Bhatt and Aditi Rao Hydari, brand ambassadors for cosmetic giant L'Oreal, made their way to the Cannes film festival this year, there was one oft-repeated question – where was the OG L'Oreal girl Aishwarya Rai, a regular fixture at the movie gala for 24 years whose look is carefully dissected each year.

The 52-year-old model-actor, one of India's most well-known faces, made her appearance in a sculpted blue gown by Amit Aggarwal towards the end of the festival, her photographs and videos immediately flooding social media. And the conversation once again turned to her weight. There was trolling and much body shaming.

Among those who spoke was journalist Mrinal Pande. "The natural beauty has diminished this time. The cheeks appear somewhat more puffed up," the Padma Shri winning journalist known for her feminist writing said on X.

When she was questioned, Pande said celebrities are judged on a different metric.

Aishwarya has been subjected to trolling earlier. Unlike many of her contemporaries, the 'Devdas' actor appeared comfortable with her post pregnancy weight after the birth of her daughter Aaradhya in 2011.

According to clinical psychologist Shweta Sharma, the criticism about Aishwarya's looks is more about the way society perceives beauty.

"It happened before also when she gained weight after the delivery… Aishwarya has always existed in the minds of Indian women or I would say globally as a beauty icon, as a Miss World, as a symbol of perfection. But the problem is that our idea of a beauty icon itself has become deeply corrupted by rigid societal standards," Sharma told PTI.

"We admire her for her beauty, but at the same time, we never understand or we deny that they always have a right to age naturally, they can gain weight, they can change physically or simply look human, which she accepts as a celebrity, definitely with grace," she added.

Actor Kangana Ranaut was the first from within the industry to school trolls targeting Aishwarya, telling them to get used to seeing older women on red carpets.

Aishwarya's 'Devdas' co-star Madhuri Dixit said such trolling was sending a wrong message to society and especially young people.

"She (Aishwarya) has been going there for 20 years. She has done the whole country proud. She is a global star. As a Miss World, she has done so much for the country. You cannot reduce her to a number on a scale or a number on the dress or the size or a number on the calendar years. You cannot reduce her to that. She is beautiful. She looks beautiful but she is beautiful inside," Madhuri told PTI.

"I think people have to realise that when you make these kinds of comments, what kind of message are you sending to the youngsters today? That your worth is on how you look, not on your achievements. I think this is a completely wrong message being sent," Madhuri said.

Aishwarya first appeared at the Cannes Film Festival in 2002 when 'Devdas' was shown at the festival. The following year, she became brand ambassador for L'Oreal and has been there since. She was also the first Indian actor to be on the festival jury.

"Education is not going to help unless we are not able to break that conditioning, which constantly tells women that their worth lies in maintaining a certain appearance and a body image. I feel this conversation is important because it shows how uncomfortable society still is with the natural relation of a woman's body and identity," Sharma said. What is more concerning, she said, is when educated women participate in this criticism because it reflects how beauty norms are deeply internalised in social structures.

These unrealistic demands from women stars are diametrically opposite to how male stars are treated in the industry, Sharma said.

Sharma said men are accepted or allowed to age naturally and have the choice to play romantic and lead roles but that grace is not extended to women in showbiz.

Unlike Hollywood, where actors like Meryl Streep have roles written for them, mainstream Hindi cinema mostly marginalises women after a certain age though that is changing with time as actors such as Shefali Shah, Madhuri Dixit and many stars find lead vehicles, if not in cinema, on OTT.

Shah, in a past interview, for instance, spoke about how she regretted playing Akshay Kumar's mother despite being younger to him in 'Waqt' in 2005. In the years since, she has steered clear and has got roles of her choice in offbeat movies and OTT shows, while Dixit is earning praise for her turn in 'Maa Behen'. —*PTI*

Congo's Ebola toll rises to 100 with 550 cases

BUNIA, 9 JUNE

At least 100 people have died from Ebola in eastern Congo less than a month after authorities declared an outbreak of the rare Bundibugyo strain of the virus, officials said. Out of 550 confirmed cases reported by Sunday, there have been 101 deaths and 19 recoveries, according to the latest situation report released Monday. Health authorities believe the actual caseload may be higher because the outbreak was detected late and response efforts have been hampered by the absence of approved vaccines or treatments. Attacks on health workers, public scepticism and armed conflict have complicated containment efforts. Most cases are concentrated in Ituri province, which accounts for over 90 per cent of infections, and Uganda too. —*PTI*

— WIKIPEDIA

Sexual misconduct: ICC Chief lawyer suspended

THE HAGUE, 9 JUNE

The embattled chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) was suspended from his duties late Monday, after the court's oversight referred Karim Khan for disciplinary proceedings. In a scandal that has dragged on for more than two years, the British lawyer is facing allegations of sexual misconduct with a female aide. He has steadfastly denied any wrongdoing. A final decision on the fate of the British barrister is now up to the Assembly of States Parties, the body that oversees the ICC, which will hold a special session to decide if Khan can remain in his job at the global court. —*PTI*

Nigerian gunmen kidnap 39 during peace meeting

ABUJA, 9 JUNE

Gunmen in northwest Nigeria abducted 39 individuals meeting with a bandit leader's family, police said. The incident occurred on Sunday in Magamin Diddi, Maradun, Zamfara State, during a reconciliation and peace engagement involving 47 residents. The bandit leader arrived and kidnapped most of them, according to police spokesperson Yazid Abubakar. Communities in northern Nigeria often negotiate with armed groups due to inadequate military protection amid ongoing attacks. Nigeria faces a decade-long insurgency, with armed groups kidnapping for ransom, causing thousands of deaths and displacing millions, says the UN. —*PTI*

Indian-origin couple and son fall to death in UK

LONDON, 9 JUNE

An Indian-origin family fell from a London apartment, resulting in the death of a couple and their nine-year-old son, believed to be a suspected murder-suicide. Rakesh Pai, 47, Aditi Paralkar, 46, and their son Sid died after falling from the 36th-floor balcony of Highpoint Tower, Elephant and Castle, on 27 May. The family, living in a 45-storey building approximately 400 feet above ground, was found by emergency services after witnesses reported the fall. "Sid was born with severe illnesses," said Neil Coyle MP, who noted police believed his condition contributed to the tragedy. The deaths are under investigation, with authorities aiming to determine the circumstances. —*PTI*

Trump says Iran-Israel won't fight for 1 week

Says that a deal is likely in the next few days

ISLAMABAD, 9 JUNE

US President Donald Trump said that Iran and Israel have agreed to "leave each other alone for another week or something" after both countries traded strikes on Monday in what appeared to be a full-scale renewal of the conflict.

Iran confirmed that two of its Revolutionary Guard Corps soldiers were killed in the strikes. Iran launched missiles and drones at Israel after the IDF attacked the suburbs of Lebanon's capital Beirut. Tehran had repeatedly warned that such strikes could renew the full-fledged conflict that has been halted since the US-Iran ceasefire in April.

Trump spoke to reporters on Monday whilst departing New York after attending the NBA Finals match between the New York Knicks and the San Antonio Spurs.

Trump said he spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the phone.

"He was hit (by Iran), and he hit back. I can't blame him for that," Trump said. "They both agreed, through me, to stop. We're in the final throes of a very good deal that will not nuclear weapons. And the Strait (of Hormuz) will open up upon signing a deal, which could be in two or three days."

'ARREST THEIR WOMEN'

Israel's National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir called for bombing Beirut, detaining Lebanese women and occupying territory.

"We must think outside the box regarding Hezbollah," he said during a Security Cabinet meeting. He called for "arresting their women and children" as it "hurts them most."

Netanyahu, who faces elections later this year, has allied with several smaller fringe parties to hold onto power. —*Agencies*

WEST ASIA WAR DAY-102

> **If we go and bomb, which we can do very easily if we want, and we spend another two or three weeks bombing, they'll have nothing left whatsoever. But you won't have the Strait of Hormuz open for months. If we do the bombing, a lot of people are going to be killed. Who wants to do that? I don't. We'll get a signed document that's actually stronger than doing the bombing**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

> **Any attack on the northern communities (in Israel) will lead to an attack in the Dahiyeh (Beirut's suburbs.) The IDF will continue to operate in Lebanon against Hezbollah... Any Iranian attempt to link Lebanon and Iran and attack Israel will be met with great force**
>
> —Israel Katz, Israeli Defence Minister

You'll be on your own: Trump to Bibi

US President Donald Trump told that he said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that "you better be careful, or you will be on your own very soon" if he attacks Iran again. Trump made the remarks to Axios. Trump had previously used expletives when talking to Netanyahu, as tensions between the two leaders appear to mount. However, Israel's Ambassador to the US, Yechiel Leiter, denied reports of a diplomatic rift. "They have a deep friendship that goes back some 40 years, and sometimes lovers have a spat," Leiter told Fox News.

Iran expands 'security belt' to Red Sea

Brigadier General Esmail Qaani, head of the IRGC's Qud Force, said a new "security belt" of would extend from the Strait of Hormuz to Bab el-Mandeb. "From the Strait of Hormuz to Bab el-Mandeb and from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea, a new security belt of the (Axis of) Resistance will be established," he said in a statement on Monday, according to Press TV. This comes after Yemen's Houthi rebels, who are part of Iran's Axis, said they would block Israel ships from crossing the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

Lebanese army chief Rodolphe Haykal and Pakistani counterpart Asim Munir in Rawalpindi, on Tuesday —*NNA*

Lebanese Army Chief meets Munir as Israel bombs Tyre

ISLAMABAD, 9 JUNE

Lebanese armed forces' Commander-in-Chief General Rodolphe Haykal met Pakistan's Army Chief Field Marshal Asim Munir in Pakistan's Rawalpindi on Tuesday

During the meeting, they exchanged views on "matters of mutual interest, evolving regional security environment, defence cooperation and prospects for enhancing bilateral military relations", according to the military's media affairs wing.

"The discussions focused on strengthening professional interactions, training cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two countries," it stated.

Munir reaffirmed the importance Pakistan attaches to its relations with Lebanon and underscored the army's commitment to expanding defence collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, the statement said.

Blasts rock the Lebanese city of Tyre, on Tuesday —*NNA*

This comes as Israel continued bombing Lebanon.

At least eight people were killed after an Israeli airstrike on the port city of Tyre, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency reported. At least 32 others were injured. There were also reports of targeted strikes on Palestinian refugee camps near the city.

Israel had earlier issued evacuation warning for the city, displacing thousands of people. —*Agencies*

After quitting over scam, Gurung back as Nepal HM

KATHMANDU, 9 JUNE

Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah is set to expand his cabinet, with at least two ministers to be sworn in at a ceremony scheduled for 3pm today. The reappointment of Sudan Gurung as Home Minister will be formalised, following the cabinet's decision after a committee cleared him of allegations relaçted to his assets. Alongside Gurung, independent lawmaker Mahabir Pun will also be sworn in as Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation.

Pun, a social innovator, has long advocated for a dedicated ministry for research and development, which aims to promote innovation in Nepal. Gurung previously resigned in April amid controversy over shareholdings linked to a money laundering investigation but was reinstated after the committee's report cleared him.

The government restructured its ministries, reducing them from 25 to 18, and created a new ministry for science and technology. Gurung's return follows a probe into allegations of financial misconduct, which he claims he has clarified. —*ANI*

Indians welcome court binning $100K H1B fee

WASHINGTON, 9 JUNE

Indian diaspora organisations in the US have welcomed the federal court order of striking down the USD 1,00,000 fee on H1B visa applications, calling it a fair move to the employment-based immigration system.

On Monday, a federal judge ruled that the hefty fee imposed by US President Donald Trump was unlawful as it did not have the approval of Congress.

The H1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees annually from countries like India and China, with New Delhi the largest beneficiary.

> **These judges are really giving us a hard time, really crazy. They are giving us a very, very hard time ... they're hurting our country very badly**
>
> —Donald Trump, US President

Khanderao Kand, Chief of Policy and Strategy at the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS), said that the ruling preserved US' competitive advantage.

"Access to highly skilled global talent remains essential for the continued growth of the US's technology, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing sectors. The judgment reinforces the principle that major policy changes must be grounded in statutory authority and economic realities," he said.

"All stakeholders connected with H1B visas will heave a sigh of relief after the court order, but one wonders if this is truly the end of the matter," said Sanjeev Joshipura, Executive Director, Indiaspora. —*PTI*

US to offer fast visa interviews for $750

WASHINGTON, 9 JUNE

The US State Department will launch a pilot "premium" visa service from 1 July, allowing business and tourist visa applicants to secure interview appointments within 10 days by paying an additional $750 on top of the standard $185 fee. The programme will run until 31 December at select US embassies and consulates.

The move comes amid longer visa processing times linked to the Trump administration's tighter immigration policies. Recent measures include higher scrutiny of applicants, social media vetting and visa bonds of up to USD 15,000 in some countries. —*PTI*

300 killed in Afghan floods in 6 months

KABUL, 9 JUNE

At least 301 people have been killed and 385 others injured in various natural disasters in Afghanistan since the start of 2026, said Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority on Tuesday.

Hafiz Mohammad Yusuf Hammad, spokesperson for the country's National Disaster Management Authority, said that most of the deaths occurred due to events such as seasonal flash floods, which have also washed away around 580 km of roads and led to more than 30,300 acres of agricultural land being submerged or destroyed.

Heavy rainfall and flooding also destroyed shops, bridges, mosques, and wells and other water supply networks, and damaged technology such as solar panels.

Meanwhile, nearly 2,000 homes have been demolished, while another 7,187 have sustained partial damages, he added, affecting around 18,812 families' homes and livelihoods across the country.

Afghanistan is considered to be one of the most disaster-prone countriess, with floods, landslides, earthquakes and droughts bringing devestation. —*Salar News*

The UN said that Afghanistan faces 'extreme and unpredictable weather from severe drought to sudden floods' —*X @UNAMANEWS*

Russia to assist Bangladesh in AI tech for agri, health

DHAKA, 9 JUNE

Russia is set to help Bangladesh introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the fields of agriculture and health, along with preparing the country to develop its national AI Policy.

The discussions on these themes took place during the visit of Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman to Russia.

The Russian side agreed to send a delegation on the application of AI in agriculture and health, the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry stated on Tuesday.

The statement highlighted that Bangladesh and Russia are in talks to welcome up to 1,00,000 workers from Bangladesh within the next year, from the current 10,000.

Additionally, both sides agreed to expand trade ties between and Moscow with a focus on pharmaceuticals and the readymade garment sector. Russia is also looking to induct Dhaka into BRICS. —*ANI*

GATES TO TESTIFY IN CONGRESS OVER EPSTEIN LINKS

WASHINGTON, 9 JUNE

Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates is set to testify before the US House Oversight Committee on 10June, 2026, regarding his relationship with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Gates, who previously apologised for contacting Epstein after his name appeared in the Epstein Files, will address questions about his interactions.

Gates will support the committee's investigation into Epstein's activities. Gates' communications with Epstein appeared in over three million documents released by the US Department of Justice earlier this year. Gates has not been accused of misconduct, and his inclusion in the files does not imply criminal activity.

Dr Melanie Walker, who is also going to testify in Congress, alleges that she met Epstein through US President Donald Trump. She has worked in the Gates Foundation, and would vouch for the financier and keep him updated on happenings in the organisation.

Gates had previously cancelled his visit to the India AI Impact Summit after the revelations of his ties with the alleged sex traficker, and has denied being involved in any wrongdoings.—*Agenciess*

STRONGEST SINCE 1976

32,000 people displaced by Philippines quake that killed 37

GENERAL SANTOS, 9 JUNE

Rescuers searched ruined buildings in the southern Philippines on Tuesday to ensure no one was still trapped a day after the strongest earthquake to hit the country since 1976 killed at least 37 people, injured nearly 500 and displaced more than 32,000 to emergency shelters.

The 7.8 magnitude earthquake, which struck on Monday morning, centred off the island of Mindanao, at sea at a depth of 33 kilometres.

In General Santos, a coastal city, at least 13 people were killed in collapsed buildings and due to falling debris. At least 18 died in Sarangani province, mostly in a landslide. Only four people were officially considered missing, but the government acknowledged that collapsed and heavily damaged buildings must be inspected for survivors or casualties.

The international airport in General Santos remained shut for a second day, with 63 domestic flights cancelled.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr deployed officials from Manila to help oversee search and rescue, distribute food packs and construction materials, and assess damages. —*PTI*

Residents walk along a damaged pavement on Tuesday after an earthquake in General Santos, Philippines—*PTI*

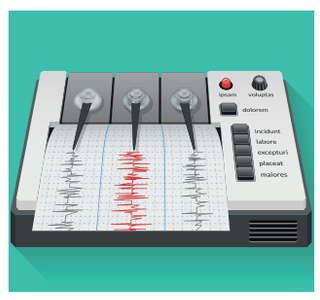
6.1 MAGNITUDE EARTHQUAKE HITS CUBA; TREMORS FELT IN FLORIDA

HAVANA, 9 JUNE

A 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck near western Cuba on Monday, shaking buildings in Havana, as its tremors were felt all the way up to north of Orlando in Florida, per social media posts.

The quake struck at a depth of 10 km in waters west of Havana, according to the US Geological Survey. No injuries or damage were reported and no tsunami was created.

Miami-Dade County officials in the US announced that they were evacuating several buildings and temporarily suspending service for two elevated commuter train services.



This was the largest earthquake ever recorded in the Gulf of Mexico with modern instruments, which date back to the 1950s. —*PTI*

—FREEPIK

Rupee rises 25P to close at 95.36 against USD

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

The rupee appreciated 25 paise to close at 95.36 against the US dollar on Tuesday. The rupee opened at 95.47, hitting an intraday high of 95.23 and a low of 95.67. Trump's call for Iran to return to the negotiating table eased US-Iran tensions, pushing Brent crude down 2.04 per cent to USD 92.33 per barrel and the dollar index 0.24 per cent lower to 99.80. Forex traders said the rupee was supported by easing West Asia tensions, likely RBI intervention, strong domestic markets, and softer US Treasury yields. On Monday, the rupee had depreciated 43 paise to finally settle at 95.61 for the day. —*PTI*

Rapido, Morth set Guinness Record with 4L captains

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Rapido has partnered with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to support nationwide awareness and citizen participation for the government's Rahveer Scheme. The Scheme encourages citizens to assist road accident victims without hesitation, since prompt intervention during the first hour after an accident can significantly improve survival and recovery outcomes. As part of the launch, more than 4,00,000 Rapido captains and consumers took the Rahveer Pledge through the company's platform, setting a Guinness World Record, according the ride-hailing platform. The collaboration was announced in the presence of Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, senior ministry officials and Rapido co-founder Aravind Sanka. —*PTI*

Gold rebounds to Rs 1.6 lakh/10g, silver stays steady

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Gold prices in India surged by Rs 1,500 on Tuesday, reaching Rs 1,60,300 per 10 grams due to a weaker US dollar and improved market sentiment. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity rose from Rs 1,58,800 on Monday, despite global gold prices trading lower. Analyst Saumil Gandhi attributed the rise to a decline in crude oil prices, a pullback in US dollar and Treasury yields. Meanwhile, silver remained steady at Rs 2,55,700 per kilogram. Market optimism increased after Iran and Israel agreed to halt attacks, and US President Donald Trump's comments on progress towards a ceasefire boosted hopes for diplomacy. Spot gold dipped slightly to USD 4,326.78 per ounce, while silver rose to USD 68.28.—*PTI*

Flipkart joins Meta for creator-led shopping

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

E-commerce giant Flipkart has announced a partnership with Meta Platforms to enable creator-led shopping on social media platforms. The collaboration allows content creators to discover and tag products from Flipkart and Myntra directly within their Facebook posts and reels. Creators will earn a commission on each sale, and consumers can purchase products by tapping the product tags. The initiative will launch on Facebook initially, with Instagram set for the next phase. Flipkart Group CFO Ravi Iyer said, "Two years ago, Flipkart recognised that Gen Z was rewriting Indian retail rules. That discovery was moving from search bars to social feeds, and creators were becoming the new storefront. This partnership with Meta is a natural extension of that conviction." —*PTI*

Zepto flags losses, ED summons ahead of upcoming IPO

Claims regulatory hurdles as key risks in IPO filing, says losses widen

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Quick commerce unicorn Zepto has revealed a history of significant operating losses and Enforcement Directorate (ED) summonses against its co-founders.

Its updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus, filed on Monday, exposed the primary risk factors for its upcoming initial public offering (IPO).

Zepto's updated prospectus revealed that its net loss widened to Rs 5,905.19 crore in FY26 from Rs 4,699.71 crore in FY25, even as operational revenue more than doubled to Rs 22,623.58 crore.

The Bengaluru-based firm warned it has been unprofitable since its July 2021 inception and expects continued negative cash flows from its expansion. Key risk factors include intense competition, slowing demand, rising compliance costs, and heavy operational dependence on its dark store network.

Zepto said it is contesting a Rs 7 lakh penalty imposed by the Central Consumer Protection Authority over alleged dark patterns, including basket sneaking, misleading ads, and drip pricing, and has appealed the order before the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.

In its updated IPO prospectus, the Bengaluru-based firm disclosed that co-founders Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra received ED summonses in April. The agency requested financial, business, and foreign investment documents as part of a Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) probe.

The directives sought documents on foreign investments, shareholding, and the business model.

While an interim stay has been granted, the company said any adverse ruling or legal reinterpretation could impact its operations and growth prospects.

The Bengaluru-based unicorn filed an updated draft with SEBI to raise Rs 8,010 crore through a fresh issue and Offer for Sale (OFS).

The total issue is estimated at Rs 11,000 crore, with Zepto expected to launch in July.

The promoter group, including Lazarus Trust and The Vohra Trust, will not sell any shares. Zepto's revenue surged 75.26 per cent in Q4 FY26, with 64 crore orders processed in FY26. —*PTI*

Zepto founders to retain full stake

Zepto co-founders **Kaivalya Vohra** and **Aadit Palicha** will not dilute their holdings in the company's upcoming IPO, opting out of the Offer for Sale (OFS) component.

Family trust entities Lazarus Trust and The Vohra Trust will also retain their stakes.

The promoter group currently holds 18.47 per cent of the company, representing more than 232 crore shares.

Instead, early investors will lead the OFS. Nexus Venture Partners is the largest seller, offloading over 8.77 crore shares.

Razor Ventures Zepto LLC will sell up to 93.6 lakh shares, Contrary ZEP Holdings LLC 78 lakh shares, and Kaiser entities around 86 lakh shares collectively.—*PTI*

FirstCry to file Rs 1,000 cr IPO in June

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Swara Baby Products, a manufacturer of baby, adult, and feminine hygiene products backed by FirstCry, plans to file draft papers with Sebi this month to raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through an Initial Public Offering (IPO), sources said. The IPO will include a fresh issue and an Offer for Sale (OFS) by existing shareholders, with JM Financial and Avendus Capital appointed as lead managers.

Attempts to contact the company and bankers for comment were unsuccessful. Led by Alok Birla, with over 18 years' industry experience, Swara Baby produces disposable hygiene products across multiple categories. Established in 2021, it now offers seven product categories and operates four manufacturing facilities in Madhya Pradesh. It has supply partnerships with multinational firms including Unicharm, P&G, Kimberly-Clark, and Kenvue, reporting a CAGR of over 30 per cent during FY23-FY25. —*PTI*

WITHIN 3 YEARS

'TCS will have equal AI agents as human employees'

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) will have as many AI agents as its human workforce within the next three years, Tata Sons Chairman **N Chandrasekaran** said on Monday, underscoring the company's growing focus on AI as a key driver of future growth.

Speaking at TCS' 31st Annual General Meeting, Chandrasekaran said, "The day is not very far when TCS will have equal number of AI agents or AI workers as their physical workers."

He noted that the company is already investing extensively

in AI agents across internal operations, solution frameworks and external operations as part of its broader strategy to capitalise on the rapid evolution of enterprise AI.

Chandrasekaran identified five core AI growth areas, including, legacy system modernisation, business process redesign, AI agent governance, sovereign AI for data control, and physical AI applications such as industrial robotics.

Chandrasekaran said fears of AI disrupting tech services are misplaced, as falling AI costs will drive wider adoption and boost enterprise technology spending, with most companies expecting higher AI-led investments over the next two years.

TCS' AI revenues has grown at a compound quarterly rate of more than 22 per cent over the last four quarters, with annualised AI revenue reaching USD 2.5 billion in the last quarter of fiscal 2026. —*ANI*

NLC India's OFS oversubscribed 5 times

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

The government's offer for sale (OFS) of up to 3 per cent stake in NLC India was heavily oversubscribed on the first day, with institutional bidders pledging Rs 4,158 crore. Non-retail investors bid for over 13.03 crore shares at Rs 319.06 each, surpassing the base offer of 2.49 crore shares.

The government is selling approximately 4.16 crore shares at a floor price of Rs 303, which is a 9.73 per cent discount to Monday's. If fully subscribed, the stake sale could raise Rs 1,200 crore. NLC India's shares fell 2.32 per cent.

The government currently owns 72.20 per cent of the firm. This fiscal year, the government raised Rs 12,166 crore from PSU stake sales, including Coal India, NHPC, and Central Bank of India. —*PTI*

Chhattisgarh okays state-run power utility IPO

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

The Chhattisgarh cabinet on Tuesday approved the listing of state-run Chhattisgarh State Power Transmission Company (CSPTCL) on the stock exchange through an IPO to encourage farmers to shift from paddy cultivation to alternative Kharif crops, officials said.

The move is expected to provide citizens and investors an opportunity to participate in the company's growth journey while strengthening its financial capacity and transparency, a government official said.

The government also approved a revamped version of the Krishak Unnati Yojana for the kharif season of 2026.

Under the new framework, farmers cultivating pulses, oilseeds, maize, kodo millet,

kutki, ragi and cotton, or those shifting from paddy to other kharif crops, will receive input assistance of Rs 15,000 per acre, he said.

He added that the decision aims to promote crop diversification, increase farmers' income, and reduce dependence on paddy cultivation. It is also expected to expand pulses, oilseeds and other alternative crops while supporting long-term agricultural sustainability and water conservation. —*PTI*

Sebi misunderstood fund entries: Rajesh

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Rajesh Exports Chairman **Rajesh Mehta** on Tuesday denied any fund diversion in subsidiary ACC Energy and promoter-controlled Elest Ltd. He said Sebi had not understood the accounting entries.

The denial comes as the Bengaluru-based company faces potential removal from the Rs 18,100-crore ACC Production-Linked Incentive scheme.

In a June 3 interim order, the market regulator flagged a circular fund-routing scheme between ACC Energy Storage and promoter-controlled Elest Pvt Ltd.

Sebi highlighted a chain of rapid, overlapping transactions starting in January 2025, when Elest acquired 49 per cent of ACC Energy. Soon after, Elest transferred Rs 147 crore to ACC Energy, then returned Rs 112 crore to Elest. Additionally, ACC Energy invested Rs 262 crore back into Elest without providing any valuation details to justify

- Rajesh Exports faces potential removal from the Rs 18,100-crore ACC Production-Linked Incentive scheme.

the move.

Sebi concluded that the cross-holding arrangement diluted Rajesh Exports Ltd's (REL) stake in ACC Energy from 100 per cent to 51.05 per cent, alienating 48.95 per cent to Elest was a "scheme to mislead investors". —*PTI*

FPI inflows into FAR securities rise by Rs 8,795 cr

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have invested Rs 8,794.743 crore in government securities under the Fully Accessible Route (FAR) after the government exempted them from income tax on interest income and capital gains arising from investments in these bonds via on ordinance on 5 June.

The exemption is applicable retrospectively from 1 April, 2025.

According to data from the Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL), FPI holdings in FAR securities stood at Rs 3.32 lakh crore on Tuesday, up from Rs 3.23 lakh crore on 3 June.

FAR allows non-resident investors to invest in specified Government of India dated securities without any investment ceilings.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in its June monetary policy announcement, also expanded the universe of securities available under the FAR by including all new issuances of 15-year, 30-year and 40-year tenor government securities.

The central bank also removed limits related to short-term investment, concentration and individual securities for FPI investments under the general route. —*PTI*

Mkts recover, Sensex up 400 pts

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty snapped a two-day losing streak on Tuesday, boosted by strong banking stocks, recovering global markets, and lower oil prices. Easing West Asia tensions also lifted investor sentiment.

In volatile trading, the Sensex climbed 394.50 points, or 0.54 per cent, to settle at 73,918.76. During the day, it jumped as much as 511.15 points, or 0.69 per cent, to hit an intra-day high of 74,035.41.

A total of 2,782 stocks advanced, while 1,423 declined

and 193 remained unchanged on the BSE Sensex.

Meanwhile, Nifty ended higher by 119.10 points, or 0.52 per cent, at 23,242.10. Intra-day it climbed 156.4 points, or 0.67 per cent, to 23,279.40.

PSU banks outperformed the broader market, driven by RBI measures to boost liquidity and lower funding costs, which lifted stocks such as Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank and Bank of India. The PSU Bank index rose 3.83 per cent, while IT and utilities lagged.

Meanwhile, Foreign Institutional Investors offloaded equities worth Rs 5,555.67 crore on Monday. Brent crude declined 1.66 per cent to USD 92.69 per barrel.

On Monday's session, the Sensex tumbled 719.08 points, or 0.97 per cent, to close at 73,524.26. The Nifty settled 243.70 points, or 1.04 per cent, lower at 23,123. —*PTI*

Adani Energy to acquire smart meter firm for Rs 3,050 cr

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) signed a securities purchase agreement for a 100 per cent equity stake in IntelliSmart Infra structure for Rs 3,050 crore.

IntelliSmart, a leading smart metering joint venture of National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL), is one of India's top asset operators, managing over 2.2 crore meters across Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Assam.

AESL's acquisition aims to strengthen its position as India's largest smart metering platform with more than 4.7 crore meters.

The Rs 3,050 crore deal includes acquiring all of IntelliSmart's shares and redeeming debentures held by NIIF. The transaction awaits regulatory approvals.

Kandarp Patel, AESL CEO said, "Acquisition of IntelliSmart enhances our capabilities, supports India's power sector modernisation." Meanwhile, IntelliSmart CEO, Anil Rawal, expressed pride this milestone. —*PTI*

HDFC lending rates up by 10 bps

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

HDFC Bank has increased its Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate (MCLR) by up to 10 basis points across tenors, effective 8 June.

The highest hike of 10 bps is for loans with a two-year maturity, up from 8.45 to 8.55 per cent.

The one-year MCLR has been revised up by 5 basis points to 8.40 per cent, used for most consumer loans.

Other tenors—have also been raised by 5 basis points, now at 8.10 per cent, 8.20 per cent, 8.35 per cent, and 8.65 per cent, respectively.

The decision follows the Reserve Bank's recent decision to keep interest rates unchanged, considering rising energy prices and supply disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis. —*PTI*

DIGITAL 'DARK PATTERNS'

Online shoppers lose up to ₹28,000 cr annually: Report

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Indian consumers are Rs 25,000 to Rs 28,000 crore annually due to deceptive interface designs, commonly known as 'dark patterns', across online marketplaces.

According to a Datum Intelligence report released Tuesday, 88 per cent of India's 304 million online buyers lose Rs 78 to Rs 87 monthly to digital dark patterns—hidden fees, forced add-ons, and subscription traps.

The survey found that 63 per cent of online users faced hidden charges or drip pricing, up from 52 per cent in 2024, while 73 per cent of platforms used forced-action tactics to influence users' choices.

"Existing regulatory interventions have so far had limit-

ed success in curbing deceptive digital practices that continue to impact millions of consumers," the report noted.

The study analysed 12 leading platforms across e-commerce, quick commerce and online travel.

Among e-commerce platforms, Amazon emerged as the most trusted, with 50 per cent of users naming it their preferred choice. In contrast, Flipkart was the only platform where distrust (41 per cent) exceeded trust (37 per cent), a gap the report attributed to higher per-encounter 'financial extraction'.

In the online travel sector, MakeMyTrip was perceived as the safest, while Cleartrip ranked among the most harmful. In quick commerce, BigBasket recorded one of the highest severity scores.

The study also highlighted an "awareness paradox" among Indian shoppers.

While 81 per cent of respondents said they were aware of dark patterns, 85 per cent still reported being misled by them. —*PTI*

Corps to hike pay in FY27: Report

MUMBAI, 9 JUNE

Corporate India is likely to see salary increments in the range of 8.6 to 10.2 per cent across industries this financial year, driven by sustained demand for skilled and operation talent, a report said on Tuesday.

TeamLease Services' report, Jobs and Salaries Primer 2026-27, attrubutes the rise to high-growth sectors including EV and EV Infrastructure, FinTech, Health & Pharma.

Meanwhile, corporate India is expected to reduce hiring in the July-September quarter, amid economic uncertainty and geopolitical challenges, a survey said on Tuesday.

According to ManpowerGroup's latest Employment Outlook Survey of more than 3,100 employers across India conducted from 1 April to 30 April, the Net Employment Outlook (NEO) for Q3 2026 stood at 48 per cent, down 20 points from the previous quarter but stronger by 6 points since Q3 2025. —*PTI*

FIFA denies World Cup tickets to Iran fans

This has left thousands in limbo as many had already booked flights, accommodation

TIJUANA, 9 JUNE

FIFA has revoked the ticket allocation for Iran fans at the team's three World Cup games in the United States, the national soccer federation claimed Tuesday.

This has left thousands of supporters in limbo after many had already booked flights, accommodation and travel plans to follow the national team.

Each federation for the 48 teams taking part is entitled to receive and distribute 8 per cent of stadium capacity at the World Cup, adding up to several thousands of tickets for each game.

Just days before Iran opens its World Cup, 15 on June at the Los Angeles Rams' stadium in Inglewood against New Zealand, the federation claimed that it was now unable to provide any tickets to its supporters.

The claim adds to the turmoil between Iranian soccer, FIFA and tournament co-host the US, which began military attacks on Iran on 28 February.

Iran's team is now based in the Mexican border city of Tijuana instead of its pre-war plan to train in Tucson, Arizona.

Some federation officials also have been denied visas to enter the US. where Iran also plays Belgium in Inglewood on 21 June and then Egypt in Seattle on 26 June.

Federations of World Cup teams typically sell their ticket allocation to the most loyal fans who attend games at home and away.

Iran residents were subject to a travel ban by the US government since last year and were unlikely to get entry visas for the World Cup. It was unclear how many tickets in Iran's allocation were sold since the tournament draw was made in December to the country's diaspora including in the US.

Still, FIFA president Gianni Infantino stated in 2017, when US soccer officials were preparing a co-hosting bid with Canada and Mexico they won the following year, that fans must have access to the tournament. —*PTI*

Football fans install giant hoardings of Neymar Jr, Lionel Messi and Emiliano Martínez ahead of the FIFA World Cup in Kochi, Keralam —*PTI*

Messi set for Argentina's World Cup warm-up after injury scare

Auburn, 9 June

Argentina captain Lionel Messi is set to return in the reigning champions' final World Cup warm-up match against Iceland on Tuesday, coach Lionel Scaloni has confirmed.

Messi missed the 2-0 friendly win over Honduras on 6 June as he recovered from left hamstring fatigue suffered while playing for Inter Miami. Scaloni said the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner would feature, though his minutes would be carefully managed to avoid risks.The coach added that player workloads would be monitored closely ahead of Argentina's title defence. Nico Paz, Nahuel Molina and Gonzalo Montiel are fit again, while Julian Alvarez and Leandro Paredes are nearing full recovery.

Argentina are also considering replacements for injured defender Leonardo Balerdi before opening their World Cup campaign against Algeria on 16 June. —*PTI*

Ex-UEFA prez files complaint against FIFA boss

GENEVA, 9 JUNE

Former Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) president Michel Platini has filed a fresh criminal complaint in France against FIFA President Gianni Infantino and five other Swiss football and prosecution officials, alleging a conspiracy to prevent him from becoming FIFA president in 2015.

Platini, who was acquitted last year in a Swiss appeal court after facing fraud charges linked to a 2 million Swiss franc payment from former FIFA chief Sepp Blatter, claims false accusations and influence peddling derailed his candidacy. Lawyers will also pursue civil damages from FIFA.

Infantino, once Platini's long-time subordinate at UEFA, was elected FIFA president in 2016 after Platini and Blatter were forced from office amid Swiss investigations. —*PTI*

Somali referee denied US entry

A Somali referee selected for the FIFA World Cup 2026 has been denied entry into the United States due to "vetting concerns", US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said.

The official, later identified by FIFA as Omar Abdulkadir Artan, arrived at Miami International Airport from Istanbul on Saturday and underwent additional screening before being deemed inadmissible. CBP did not disclose further details. The development comes amid US travel restrictions that include Somalia.

FIFA said it was informed Artan's immigration status would remain unchanged, noting visa and admission decisions rest with host governments. —*ANI*

—*ANI*

Dayanand qualifies for Australian Open main draw

SYDNEY, 9 JUNE

India's Saneeth Dayanand advanced to the men's singles main draw of the Australian Open badminton tournament after winning both his qualifying matches on Tuesday.Seeded fourth in the qualifiers, Dayanand defeated Australia's Karono 21-17, 21-15 before cruising past Malaysia's Ming Hong Lim 21-9, 21-16. He will next face China's Hu Zhe An in the opening round. However, Manraj Singh exited after a 11-21, 18-21 defeat to Malaysia's Eogene Ewe in the second qualifying round.India also suffered an early setback in men's doubles, with Achutaditya Rao and P Arjun Reddy losing 15-21, 15-21 to Australia's Kanki Igawa and Ooi Yi Hern.The main singles draw begins on Wednesday, with two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu leading India's challenge against Peru's Ines Lucia Castillo. —*PTI*

—*SCREENGRAB*

Rain washes out 3rd ODI in West Indies, SL wins series

KINGSTON, 9 JUNE

The third one-day international between West Indies and Sri Lanka was washed out without a ball bowled, following the earlier two matches. Umpires called off play shortly after 6pm. as the outfield remained unfit due to rain. Sri Lanka won the first match by 41 runs, ending a 13-year drought in the Caribbean. The subsequent washouts gave Sri Lanka a 1-0 series victory. Sri Lanka captain Kusal Mendis stated, "We're very happy to win the series. We did really well in that one game in all three departments. I'm happy with my first series victory as captain." West Indies captain Shai Hope praised Sri Lanka's performance, adding, "You can't control mother nature." The series continues with three T20 internationals, starting Thursday in Kingston. —*PTI*

Rohit, Pandya declared fit for Afghan ODIs

MULLANPUR, 9 JUNE

Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya and senior batter Rohit Sharma have been cleared by the Sports Science team of BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE) to participate in the upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan starting on Sunday in Dharamsala.

Both Pandya and Rohit missed quite a few IPL matches for Mumbai Indians due to their respective issues. While Pandya was battling back spasms, Rohit had a hamstring niggle. Hardik has been at the CoE in Bengaluru since 2 June.

Pandya is an important cog in India's white ball set up given the balance he lends to the side with his pace bowling and lusty hits during the death overs.

The most relieving aspect is that Pandya is bowling 10 overs in training session which means that he is ready for the rigours of 50-over cricket.

It is, however, not clear whether Pandya will join with the team in Chandigarh for a training session under lights or directly link up in Dharamsala which was the original plan.

Star batter Virat Kohli is already missing the series owing to a hamstring injury. Apart from Dharamsala, the rubber features games in Lucknow and Chennai on June 17 and 20 June respectively. —*PTI*

PRASIDH REPLACES SIRAJ FOR IRELAND AND ENGLAND T20IS

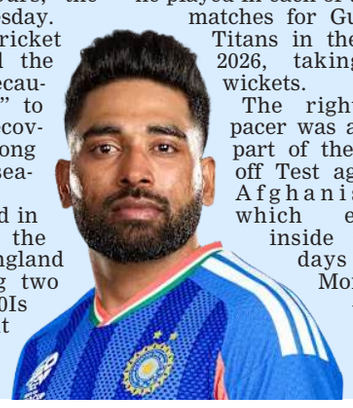
Mohammed Siraj has been rested as part of workload management, with Prasidh Krishna named as his replacement for Ireland and England tours, the BCCI said on Tuesday.

The Indian Cricket Board described the move as a "precautionary measure" to ensure quick recovery ahead of the long international season.

Siraj was named in the squad for the Ireland and England series consisting two and five T20Is respectively but was not picked for the Asian Games in Japan.

Siraj was a late addition to the Indian squad in their last T20I assignment, the T20 World Cup, while he played in each of the 17 matches for Gujarat Titans in the IPL 2026, taking 19 wickets.

The right-arm pacer was also a part of the one-off Test against Afghanistan which ended inside three days on Monday. —*PTI*



India A pull off a heist in Lanka after Gaikwad's hundred

India A staged a remarkable fightback with the ball to snatch a thrilling eight-run victory over Sri Lanka A —*X/BCCI*

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

In a tense tri-series opener, India A pulled off a narrow eight-run victory against Sri Lanka A, after a late collapse in the chase. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's debut for India A ended with a modest 14, yet his team's resilience saw them through.

Chasing 278, Sri Lanka A appeared poised for victory with captain Sahan Arachchige scoring 74 off 72 balls. However, the last four wickets fell in quick succession in 10 balls, including three in the final over from pacer Arshad Khan, sealing India A's win. Ruturaj Gaikwad's composed 101 guided India A to 277 for six.

The experienced batter's 21st List A century came off 112 balls. Tilak Varma contributed 60 from 97 balls, adding 150 runs for the fourth wicket with Gaikwad amid challenging conditions, with persistent winds and a pitch offering some assistance to bowlers. Gaikwad reached his half-century in 66 balls with a six off spinner Vijayakanth Viyaskanth, and his century was brought up with a single off the same bowler before his dismissal. Tilak also fell soon after trying to ramp pacer Mohamed Shiraz, caught behind.

The Sri Lankan innings featured a 93-run opening stand between Niroshan Dickwella (47 off 45) and Avishka Fernando (45 off 59). Both openers were caught attempting slog sweeps against Badoni, who took 2/46. Sri Lanka struggled after early wickets, with the team bowled out for 269 in 48.5 overs. Sahan Arachchige's 74 was top-scoring, and the bowlers Arshad Khan (2/24) and Badoni kept India in the game.

Sooryavanshi showed promise with three fours but was dismissed trying a bunt. Priyansh Arya made 32 before a run-out ended his innings. India A will face Afghanistan A here on 11 June. —*PTI*

Anand urges Gukesh to draw inspiration from Praggs

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Legendary chess grandmaster Viswanathan Anand praised R Praggnanandhaa's impressive style and urged struggling world champion D Gukesh to learn from the recent Norway Chess champion. Praggnanandhaa became the first Indian to win the Norway title, though Gukesh finished sixth.

Anand expressed delight at Praggnanandhaa's spectacular last four rounds, saying, "He is playing the game with some amazingly impressive concepts and style." Anand advised Gukesh, who will face Javokhir Sindarov later this year, to take inspiration, pointing out that "Praggnanandhaa is playing better than Gukesh but anything can change."

He added, "He can see that if you persist with hard work, then at some point things will change." Anand highlighted Praggnanandhaa's fighting attitude and innovative concepts, noting his consistency over the last 18 months, and said, "It was really nice to see because he played very interesting chess."

Anand also discussed the healthy rivalry among Indian GMs Gukesh, Praggnanandhaa, and Arjun Erigaisi, stating, "We have never had three players at the top and they are pushing each other's game to the highest level." —*PTI*

Jemimah confident India can repeat T20 World Cup success

NEW DELHI, 9 JUNE

Star batter Jemimah Rodrigues expressed confidence that India can replicate their historic women's ODI World Cup triumph by winning the upcoming T20 World Cup in England. The tournament begins on 12 June, with India's first game against Pakistan in Birmingham. New Zealand are the defending champions, and South Africa finished runners-up in 2024.

Rodrigues said, "Everyone was part of it; they know what pressure feels like, and at the same time, everyone knows that we've crossed the line once and can do it again. That belief rubs off." She added, "When you win one, you don't want to stop there. You want to make it two, three, however many you can. So, yes, we are the favourites, no doubt about that." —PTI

STOKES CAPTAINCY ON LINE

Stokes, Atkinson under ECB fire after nightclub brawl

LONDON, 9 JUNE

England Test captain Ben Stokes and fast bowler Gus Atkinson are facing an England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) investigation after allegedly breaching team curfew rules during post-match celebrations following England's victory over New Zealand at Lord's.

The pair reportedly remained out beyond the team's mandated curfew after several England players visited a Chelsea nightclub on Sunday night to celebrate the 115-run win. The ECB confirmed on Monday that both players had been involved in an incident in the early hours of the morning.

According to UK The Telegraph, Stokes and Atkinson became caught up in an altercation involving a Saracens academy rugby player. The player allegedly attempted to punch Atkinson but missed and instead struck an ECB security guard accompanying the England squad. The guard reportedly suffered injuries requiring stitches.

Neither Stokes nor Atkinson was injured, and ECB sources insisted the cricketers "were not the aggressors". Police were not called to the scene and no arrests were made.

The matter has been referred to the Cricket Regulator, while Saracens have launched their own inquiry into the involvement of one of their academy players.

The incident comes at a sensitive time for England cricket. A curfew was reintroduced in January following criticism of players' behaviour during the Ashes tour of Australia.

The ECB is said to be angry over the curfew breach. Stokes and Atkinson could miss the second Test against New Zealand at The Oval on 17 June, with vice-captain Harry Brook a potential stand-in skipper if required. —*Agencies*